NINTENDO GAMECUBE • GBA • DS

NGC

ISSUE #102
JANUARY 2005 / £3.99
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INDEPEND... DO GAMING

NEW! NGC POCKET FOR HANDHELD GAMERS
20 PAGES OF DS AND GBA ACTION

METROID
Prime 2 tipped & Metroid DS rated!

MARIO
Dual screen Super Mario 64 reviewed!

ZELDA
Four Swords. Six pages. One verdict.

NEW SHOTS!
'Realistic' Zelda
Mario Baseball
Resi Evil 4

World Exclusive Preview of 2005's Hottest Shooter!

TIMESPLITTERS
FUTURE PERFECT

REVIEWED!
VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 • MADDEN DS
FEEL THE MAGIC • CALL OF DUTY
PRINCE OF PERSIA...



JANUARY 2005 £3.99
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SUPER ROBOT MONKEY TEAM HYPER FORCE GO!
new year

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IT'S HERE!

Without wishing to steal thunder from our new section dedicated to Nintendo's handheld consoles – **NGC *POCKET*** – first impressions of DS aren't overwhelmingly great. After the solid, rounded, satisfying snap of GBA SP, in places the finish of DS feels a little… cheap? There again, for a dual-screen system with touch-screen technology, wireless connectivity and a built-in microphone, Nintendo have done a remarkable job to keep the system affordable for the masses (UK pricing and launch date to be confirmed in a matter of weeks, by the way – hey, maybe we'll be eating our words). It's once you start interacting with a game that makes creative use of these features (something like *Feel the Magic*) that you understand what DS is all about, why it just *works*, why Nintendo are on to a winner.

The first thing we did with our three systems? Fire up the in-built messaging service *PictoChat* and send each other sketches of grotesquely oversized man-pipes.

Happy New Year.

Team NGC

TURN OVER THE PAGE!
To see the quality entertainment we've piped into this very **NGC**!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Go to page 112, where for a small amount of cash you can get three free issues and a free limited edition **NGC** bag! No excuses now!



WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



■ First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

■ A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

■ Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 12 years of Ninty love right there.

NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!





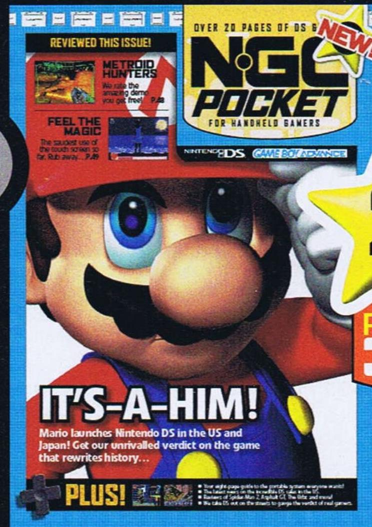
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'SPLITTERS EXCLUSIVE

THE FUTURE IS HERE

An in-depth look at one of 2005's biggest Gamecube titles…



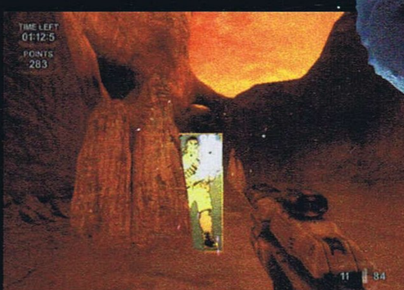


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MEET ENJiKi

The new year sales are an important time for our Enjiki, when she stocks up on tight jeans, boots and wonderbras to keep herself looking shapely for the year to come. The rest of the team have tried this too, but the result was dodgy. Kittsy not fitting a wonderbra was one thing – Paul looking good in his was just plain frightening. And a little kinky…



METROID PRIME 2

3 PAGE 86

TIPPED! Get every missile in the game with our no-nonsense guide.



ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS

4 PAGE 58

HANG ON Link's been drawn and quartered. Neat.



VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

5 PAGE 78

MOVIE MADNESS Joe's already saved the girl – but can they have a happy ending?

WHAT'S IN NGC ?

Enough to keep you busy for weeks...

PREVIEWS

Amazing new games coming your way



NEWS

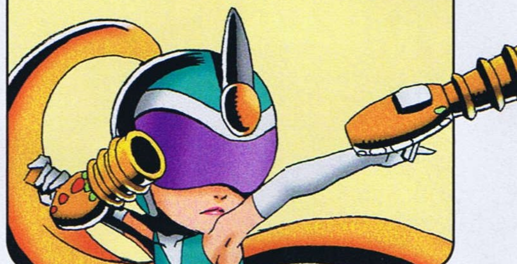
The latest rumours, truths and goings-on

EXTENDED PLAY

Getting more from your favourite games

REVIEWS

Ways to blow your hard-earned cash



OUR PROMISE

To hack away at the melons of dishonesty with the machete of truth, justice and integrity. It might sound like three machetes, but it really does have all three properties in the one blade. Marcus got it from a 'voodoo tribesman' in a jungle just north-east of Grimsby where he was looking for flora that'll help him 'cure cancer'. This is the only lie you'll see in the next five pages.



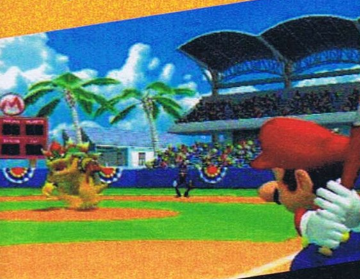
NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

IN NEWS



STARFOX DETAILS
FANTASTIC MR FOX NEWS P10



MARIO BASEBALL
CAN YOU PITCHER IT? P11



1 MILLION
DS SALES GO NUTS! P11

AND MORE...





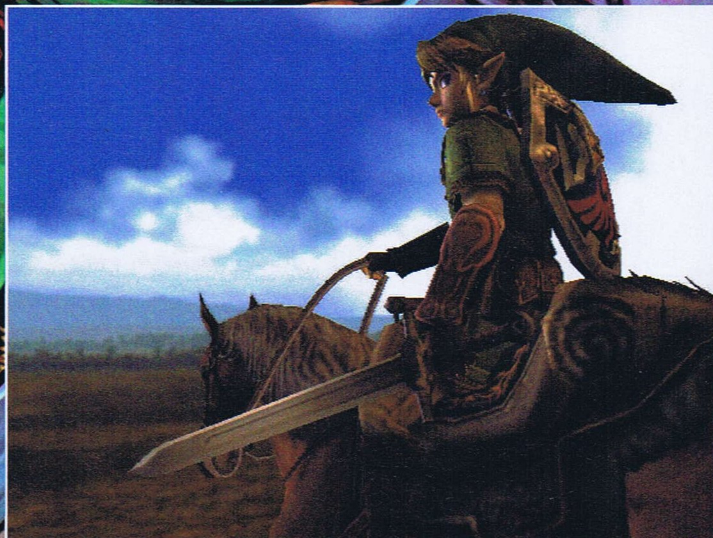
ACT YOUR AGE, LINK!

BRAND-NEW SHOTS OF THE BEAUTIFUL GAME...

Here are some sharp new Zelda shots to take away with you before we shut up shop for the rest of the year and gorge ourselves on the spoils of the holiday season. Just look at them – stunning one and all. What's more, if Shigeru Miyamoto is to be believed (and we reckon you can pretty much trust him on this one), we'll have just five more months to wait before its final unveiling. Speaking to Japanese publication Famitsu he stated that progress on Link's stunning new adventure was coming along very well, and that Nintendo plan to have a final, playable version of the game ready in time for E3.

It may also interest you to know that Treehouse, Nintendo of America's localisation and product development team, are already working on the title. Treehouse are responsible for, among other things, translating and evaluating Japanese games so that they can be prepared for western markets. This also includes establishing the correct ESRB rating (the US equivalent of PEGI ratings) like the 'E' for Everyone, 'T' for Teen, and 'M' for Mature, which find their way onto US game boxes.

Currently Treehouse predict that, unlike *Wind Waker*, which was assigned an E rating and could be played by all and sundry, the new Zelda will be in line for a slightly more mature Teen Rating. As a point of comparison, the rather dark, and often genuinely disturbing *Majora's Mask* received an E.



△ Link, looking moody on his horse. But he can do more than just ride it...



△ We can't wait to try our hand at fighting on horseback. It's got to be better than *King Arthur's* horseploitation.



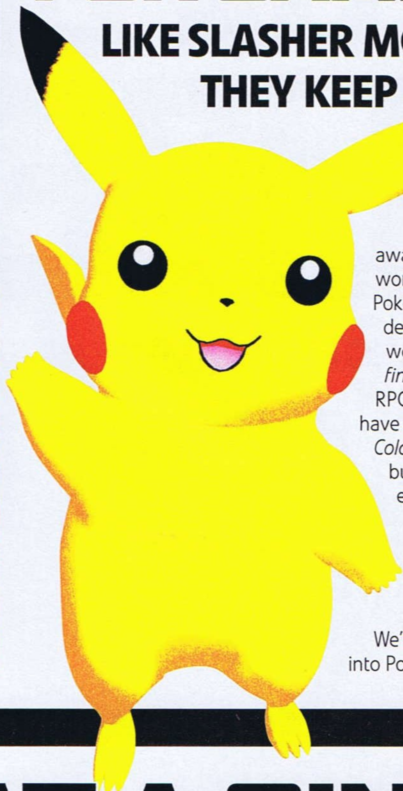
MORE FROM MIYAMOTO...

Other than the new Zelda, the game everyone really wants to see is *Mario 128*. According to Miyamoto, the game is still very much in development and Nintendo are currently going working on a number of 'experiments' with Mario – suggesting that it's still a long way from being a finished game. He also explained that the title *Mario 128* is still a tentative title, and one that's based on the overall theme of the game. Quite what that means is anyone's guess, but we can't help being reminded of the old Gamecube demo that showed 128 little Marios running around a circular arena. Could we soon be controlling a little army of Marios *Pikmin*-style? Will we actually see it before we're 50?



NEW POKÉMON FOR GAMECUBE

LIKE SLASHER MOVIE VILLAINS, THEY KEEP COMING BACK



Miyamoto recently revealed that, with Gamecube's successor (Revolution) being over a year away, Nintendo are already working on another Gamecube Pokémon title. There are no real details, but we can't help but wonder whether or not this will *finally* be the 'proper' Pokémon RPG that every man and his 'Mon have been waiting for. Sure, *Colosseum's* Story mode was okay, but it was pretty basic and extremely linear. Nintendo are already on their way to delivering the Zelda that everyone wanted – it's not unlikely that they're planning the same with this.

We'll have an in-depth investigation into Pokémon's future next issue…

...AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU

NINTENDO FINALISE PLANS FOR THEIR CINEMATIC VENTURE

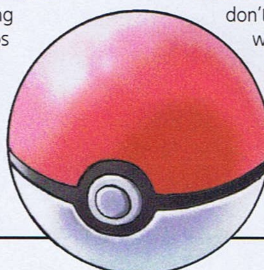
This won't happen until 2006 – but Nintendo have finally announced their plan to move into the animated film business. They've made the odd excursion into film before, with Pokémon and the quite, *quite* awful Mario Bros being just two examples. They have also had many TV series based on some of their best-loved game characters and franchises, from Kirby to F-Zero – however, these have all been either licensed films or work given to external studios to produce.

This time around, though, all aspects of film making, from planning through to production, will be handled at Nintendo, who are building their own in-house studios to create content. Exactly what this content will be, we don't know. Will we see films based on big games like Zelda and Metroid or will Nintendo create something entirely new and original? We think it would be wonderful to see Nintendo making heartwarming and visually stunning animated films like Studio Ghibli (responsible for Spirited Away and Princess Mononoke) do, but that may be asking for too much.

They've already said that they're looking at ways of combining the theatre experience with gaming, with their forthcoming Pokémon movie offering new, wirelessly downloadable game content for DS owners sitting in the theatre. It seems likely that Nintendo will want to exploit such connectivity with their films.

Whatever they plan, we hope they don't go the way of Square, whose Spirits Within lost a great deal of money during its theatrical release and actually resulted in the closure of the Hawaii studio where the $135 million film was made.





SHORT CUTS



N64 PLAYER?

Nothing's confirmed, but a recent poll on Nintendo.com asked readers if they'd like an N64 player for Gamecube – and if so, how much they'd be willing to pay for it. It's a strange thing to ask if Nintendo have no plans to release such a device, but you have to wonder how it's supposed to work. Where would it fit? Would it be an external device? Is it supposed to squeeze under the Gamecube *and* GBA player? And who would it appeal to? Beyond Nintendo's hardcore fans, its appeal would be limited unless, as if by magic, the player could make old N64 games look fresh again. Otherwise, why not just play the games on your old N64? If you ask us, this is highly unlikely to see the light of day.



NINTENDO PLAYS BALL

You may already know that Hiroshi Yamauchi owned a substantial share of the Seattle Mariners, Seattle's baseball team. Nintendo of America have spent $67 million to buy Yamauchi's stake, so they now own over 50% of the team. The Mariners are one of the most popular teams in Japan, mainly thanks to a player called Ichiro Suzuki, who, at the time of writing, has the 'hit record' for a single season. With Mariners games being shown regularly in Japan, the acquisition ensures plenty of prominent advertising for Nintendo.

STARFOX DETAILS FINALISED



AND WITH THEM, A SCREENSHOT TSUNAMI IS UNLEASHED…

Saucy new box art? Check. 14th of February US release date? Check. Screenshots dumped on our desk a few minutes before deadline? Check!

Nintendo had some demo pods of the near-completed *Starfox* at their Nintendo World Touch! DS events in Japan back in November, and it's undergone some distinct changes since we saw it at E3. The screen furniture has been altered slightly, with crisper readings for energy levels, weapons and so on. That's purely cosmetic, but it's more polished than when we last saw it.

The biggest change (and the most disappointing one) is the move away from FPS-style controls for the on-foot sections. While Fox can still move around via the analogue stick, the C-stick is used for quick weapon selection. The pay-off is that, in order to look around freely, you have to hold the Right trigger, rooting old Foxy to the spot. Not what you want in the middle of a shoot-out with your mates. Hopefully there'll be an option to customise the controls because the new system seems rather restrictive.

On a more cheerful note, the Arwing sections look incredible and promise plenty of 'classic' Starfox action alongside the arena battling. There are still on-rails sections to look forward to – in particular a run though a forest planet that was reminiscent of *Panzer Dragoon Orta* – and a battle through an armada orbiting a planet that's bustling with so much activity you'll be able to smell your Gamecube melting under the strain. All of a sudden we're quivering with excitement.

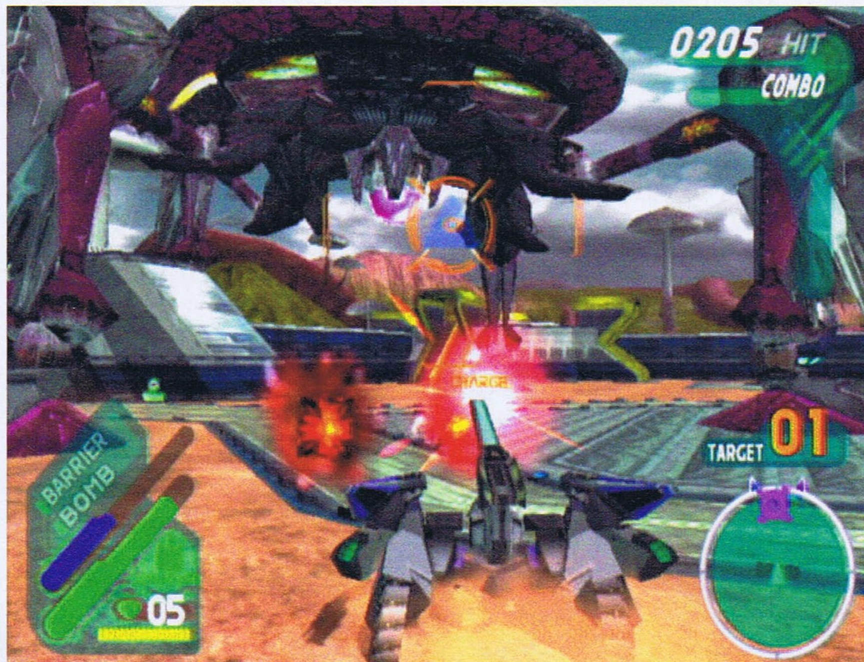


△ Krystal will always be on hand to give advice.





△ How will the changes to the controls affect the multiplayer?



△ The Landmaster is extremely agile and versatile for a tank, letting you roll and hover in the air.

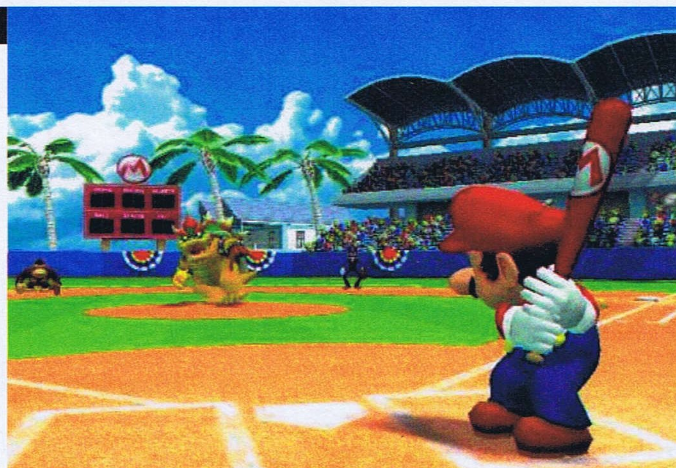








△ These battles are incredibly hectic and busy with enemy craft.



△ Mario? Playing a sport? What will they think of next? Should be good, though.

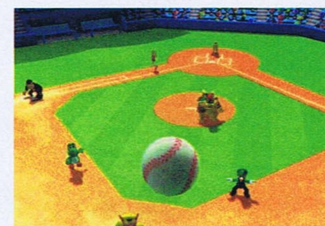
MARIO BASEBALL

NAMCO HIT ANOTHER HOME RUN…

Another Mario, another sports sim. While many have been critical about the fact this is another Mushroom Kingdom re-branded sporting sim, we're secretly looking forward to it. Maybe it's because it'll make an inaccessible US sport a little bit easier for us European simpletons. Or maybe it's because our multiplayer senses are still tingling after the excellent *Golf* and *Tennis*. Whatever, it's good to see Nintendo's strong ties with Namco continuing to bear fruit.

Unfortunately we don't have any concrete gameplay details as yet. We know that the game will include some kind of Challenge mode but that's about it. It's a pretty safe bet to assume it'll be another quality title packed to the rafters with superbly playable minigames. All that remains to be seen now is whether Europe shows any interest in it.

More on this in the coming months – it's definitely one to watch.



ONE IN A MILLION

Just before going to press we learned that DS has sold 500,000 units in Japan. Combined with US sales, this now makes a million units sold.
Oh, and if you're looking for DS news this month, you'll find it in our new section, 'NGC Pocket' starting on p.33. Many thanks to the dead helpful importers 'Skill', who supplied us with our early DS unit. You can find them at www.skill2k.com.



ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

JANUARY 2005

6	King Arthur	Konami
7	The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Castlevania (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Dr Mario (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Metroid (GBA)	Nintendo
7	NES Classics: Zelda II The Adventure of Link (GBA)	Nintendo
20	NEW ISSUE OF NGC ON SALE TODAY!	
TBC	Banjo-Kazooie Pilot (GBA)	Rare/THQ
TBC	It's Mr Pants (GBA)	Rare/THQ
TBC	Shaman King: Master of Spirits (GBA)	Konami

FEBRUARY 2005

4	Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
14	UEFA Champions League 2004-2005	EA
25	Mario Power Tennis	Nintendo
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ
TBC	Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies (GBA)	THQ
TBC	SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ
TBC	SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie (GBA)	THQ

MARCH 2005

1	Smashing Drive (GBA)	ZOO
4	Ghost Recon 2	Ubi Soft
11	Robots	Vivendi
11	Robots (GBA)	Vivendi
11	TimeSplitters Future Perfect MOST WANTED	EA
18	Mario Party 6	Nintendo
TBC	Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown	THQ
TBC	Fairly Odd Parents: Shadow Showdown (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Resident Evil 4 MOST WANTED	Capcom
TBC	Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ
TBC	Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2: BattleNexus	Konami
TBC	Viewtiful Joe 2	Capcom

MAY 2005

TBC	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (DS)	Ubi Soft
TBC	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (GBA)	Ubi Soft

SPRING 2005

Advance Guardian Heroes (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Asphalt Urban GT (DS)	Ubi Soft
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django (GBA)	Konami
Killer 7	Capcom
Medal of Honor: Dogs of War	EA
Metroid Prime Hunters: First Hunt (DS)	Nintendo
NBA Street V3	EA
Nintendo DS (Hardware)	Nintendo
Rayman DS	Ubi Soft
Sprung (DS) (working title)	Ubi Soft
Super Mario 64 DS (DS)	Nintendo
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure	Ubi Soft
Winnie the Pooh Rumbly Tumbly Adventure (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Zoo Keeper (DS)	Ignition

SUMMER 2005

Batman Begins	EA
Batman Begins (GBA)	EA

TBC 2005

Advance Wars DS (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo
Alien Hominid	O~3
Animal Crossing (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Another (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Atari Classics (DS)	Atari
Baten Kaitos	Namco
Bionicle 2 (GBA)	THQ
Boktai (working title) (DS)	Konami
Bomberman (DS)	Hudson
Caduceus (DS)	Atlus
Castlevania (working title) (DS)	Konami
Codename: Kids Next Door (GBA)	Take 2
Custom Robo	Nintendo
DK: King of Swing (GBA)	Nintendo
Dora the Explorer: Super Star Adventures (GBA)	Take 2
Dragon Ball Z (DS)	Banpresto
Dragon Booster	Konami
Dragon Booster (DS)	Konami
Dragon Quest Monsters (working title) (DS)	Square Enix
Dynasty Warriors (DS)	Koei
Egg Monster Heroes (DS)	Square Enix
Fantastic Four	Activision
Feel the Magic: XY/XX (DS)	Sega
FIFA Street MOST WANTED	EA
Final Fantasy III (DS)	Square Enix
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles (working title) (DS)	Square Enix
Fire Emblem	Nintendo
Frogger 2005	Konami
Frogger 2005 (DS)	Konami
Funkydilla	Zoonami
Game Zero (working title)	Zoonami
Ganbare Goemon (DS)	Konami
Geist	Nintendo
The Godfather	EA
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (DS)	EA
Harvest Moon (DS)	Natsume
Jam with the Band (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Lamborghini FX	Avalon
The Legend of Zelda MOST WANTED	Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda DS (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Madden NFL 2005 (DS)	EA
Mario Kart DS MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Mega Man Battle Network (DS)	Capcom
Meteos (DS)	Bandai
Mr Driller: Drill Spirits (DS)	Namco
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed (DS)	Bandai
Monster Rancher (DS)	Tecmo
Moonlight Fables (DS)	Majesco
The Movies	Activision
Nanostray (DS)	Majesco
Need for Speed Underground (DS)	EA
NEW Super Mario Bros (DS)	Nintendo
Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King (GBA)	Buena Vista
Nintendo Puzzle Collection	Nintendo
Odama MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Oggy and the Cockroaches (GBA)	Telegames
One-Line Puzzle (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
One Piece (DS)	Bandai
Pac'n Roll (DS)	Namco
Pac-Pix (DS)	Namco
Ping Pals (DS)	THQ
Pokémon Dash (DS)	Nintendo
Pokémon Diamond (DS)	Nintendo
Pokémon Pearl (DS)	Nintendo
Puppy Times (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Puyo Pop Fever (DS)	Sega
Rave Master: Special Attack Force (GBA)	Konami
Ridge Racer DS	Namco
Robots (DS)	Vivendi
Room Zoom: Race for Impact	Jaleco
Secret of Mana (DS)	Square Enix
Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus
Sonic DS (working title) (DS)	Sega
Space Raiders	Taito
Spider-Man 2 (DS)	Activision
SpongeBob SquarePants (DS)	THQ
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox Assault MOST WANTED	Nintendo
Super Princess Peach (DS)	Nintendo
Survival Kids (DS)	Konami
Tiger Woods PGA Tour Golf 2005 (DS)	EA
Touch! Kirby's Magic Paintbrush (DS)	Nintendo
Ultimate Brain Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
Ultimate Pocket Games (DS)	Telegames
Unity	Lionhead
The Urbz: Sims in the City (DS)	EA
Vandal Hearts (working title) (DS)	Konami
Viewtiful Joe (DS)	Capcom
Virtua Quest	Sega
WarioWare Inc DS (DS) MOST WANTED	Nintendo
WINX (working title) (DS)	Konami
World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco
World Soccer Winning Eleven Series (working title) (DS)	Konami
Yoshi's Universal Gravitation (GBA)	Nintendo
Yoshi's Touch and Go (working title) (DS)	Nintendo
Yu-Gi-Oh! Destiny Board Traveller (GBA)	Konami
Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS)	Konami
Zoids (DS)	Tomy



US RELEASES

The most important US releases to import…





JANUARY 2005

4	Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town for Girls (GBA)	Marvelous
11	Resident Evil 4	Capcom
11	Virtua Quest	Sega

FEBRUARY 2005

8	NBA Street Vol. 3	EA
14	Star Fox Assault	Capcom
14	WarioWare Touched! (DS)	Nintendo
15	Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway
28	Killer 7	Capcom

MARCH 2005

1	Geist	Nintendo
14	Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	Nintendo
14	Pokémon Dash (DS)	Nintendo
21	WarioWare Twisted! (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Atari Classics (DS)	Atari
TBC	Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
TBC	Pac Pix (DS)	Namco
TBC	Splinter Cell Chaos Theory	Ubi Soft
TBC	Yoshi's Touch & Go (DS)	Nintendo

APRIL 2005

TBC	Pokémon Emerald (GBA)	Nintendo

JUNE 2005

6	Advance Wars: Under Fire	Nintendo
6	Fire Emblem	Nintendo

TBC 2005

The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo



JAP RELEASES

Big name Japanese future hits.





DECEMBER

24	Puyo Pop Fever (DS)	Sega
30	Tennis no Ouji-Sama 2005 Crystal Drive (DS)	Konami
30	Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters International 2 (GBA)	Konami

JANUARY 2005

6	Digimon World X	Bandai
6	Tales of the World: Narikiri Dungeon 3 (GBA)	Namco
27	BioHazard 4	Capcom
27	Ganbare! Dodge Fighters (GBA)	Bandai

FEBRUARY 2005

TBC	Chaos Field	Sega

MARCH 2005

1	Jinsei-Game DS	Atlus
1	Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus
3	Choro Q DS	Atlus

SPRING 2005

Doubutsu no Mori DS (Animal Crossing DS)	Nintendo
Killer 7	Capcom
Nintendogs (DS)	Nintendo
Touch! Kirby Mahou no Efude (Touch! Kirby Magic Paintbrush) (DS)	Nintendo

TBC 2005

Bura Bura Donkey (GBA)	Nintendo
Caduceus (DS)	Atlus
Chibi Robo! MW	Bandai/Nintendo
The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo
Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
Meteos (DS)	Bandai
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes	Nintendo
Star Fox Assault	Nintendo
Yoot Saito's Odama	Nintendo

NGC MOST WANTED

The top ten games we're dreaming about right now (and in some cases, playing)…



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO

While Geraint's been showing off his lack of bill-paying videogame skills in the office playing *Four Swords Adventures*, the rest of us have been looking forward to the real man's Zelda. The odds for this appearing in Europe in 2006, rather than 2005, are getting shorter though, if Kittsy's sickening rumour starting is anything to go by…

IN A NUTSHELL: The final *Legend of…* for Gamecube.



2 RESIDENT EVIL 4 CAPCOM

We seem to have caused quite a stir with our *Resi 4* world exclusive a couple of issues ago. Intenet forums were buzzing with questions such as "Im in the USA Where cn I get me on of those dudes?" and "Has anyone scanned it in yet?" It's only a matter of weeks before the game hits the States and Japan and the hunger can be satisfied…

IN A NUTSHELL: A nerve-shredding trip to hicksville.



3 TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT EA

You've probably already read our *'Splitters* coverage this issue, so you'll be well aware why Free Radical's third entry in the series is one title to look forward to during the next few months. With EA's marketing spend behind it, we reckon it should receive some richly deserved high-profile public awareness in March…

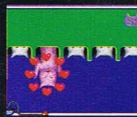
IN A NUTSHELL: The return of the king.



4 STAR FOX ASSAULT NINTENDO

Geraint's persuasive arguments (and crisp £5 note) ensured that *Star Fox Assault* rocketed up our Most Wanted chart this month. If he had to hazard a guess, he's fond of telling us, then he'd say this will be just like *Lylat Wars (Star Fox 64)* only with a better multiplayer. But then he would say that, because he's such a Fox fanboy. Benefit of the doubt, then…

IN A NUTSHELL: "Just like *Lylat Wars* only with a better multiplayer."



5 WARIO WARE INC DS NINTENDO

Although it'll be out in Japan as you read this, we've yet to sit down with a finished version (that immense pleasure will have to wait until next issue). We have great faith that this'll be a much longer experience than *Feel the Magic*, and even though we know exactly what to expect, there's a real buzz of anticipation round these parts. You can smell it.

IN A NUTSHELL: What every other *Wario Ware's* been leading up to.



6 MARIO KART DS NINTENDO

Have you seen any tyre-shredding undulations in the courses, huge banking corners or screaming great hills in the screens we've printed so far? Didn't think so. "That's a bit of a worry," said one member of the team before scratching her blue hair and looking back through recent issues. Worry no more, Mim! We're, um, sure we've seen a little rise on Yoshi Circuit…

IN A NUTSHELL: New courses, eight-way multiplayer and – yes! – solo drivers…



7 (NEW ENTRY) FIFA STREET EA

Bet you didn't expect to see a *FIFA* title in our top ten. But this is the football game we've been wanting to play since Nike's 2002 World Cup ad campaign, where Eric Cantona presided over elite international three-on-three 'first goal wins' matches in the hull of a container ship. No sign of a floating pitch just yet – but only EA can deliver such a roster of star players.

IN A NUTSHELL: Four-on-four street soccer. With Wayne Rooney!



8 (NEW ENTRY) ANIMAL CROSSING (DS) NINTENDO

Revamped with four players simultaneously in the same village over a wireless network? "Now *that's* what it's all about," Geraint's all too fond of telling us while peering over the top of his glasses and winking. He's also a big fan of the scrolling 3D world. Bum-nut.

IN A NUTSHELL: A world populated by animals – in the palm of your hand.



9 (NEW ENTRY!) CHIBI ROBO! BANDAI/NINTENDO

The odds of this robot housekeep-'em-up ever making out over here are flat to flimsy. It's the sort of game we love, though. A title you can't easily categorise (looks like an arcade adventure, plays like an RPG/puzzle/slave-'em-up), with off-the-wall humour and a bizarre line in challenges (feed goldfish to bag yourself some hearts).

IN A NUTSHELL: A game where you make people happy. And there's nowt wrong with that.



10 (NEW ENTRY!) ODAMA NINTENDO

One of Martin's tips, this one. He's mad for game combining. This month. it's pinball wargaming, next month it's platform sailing – bet you £10. *Odama's* the game where a blue army take on a red army in a roll to the death. The two-player games's fantastic…

IN A NUTSHELL: Flipping great.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

We travelled all the way to the outskirts of Nottingham, where top development studio Free Radical Design is based, to meet the people behind *TimeSplitters* and see exactly how Gamecube's number one first-person shooter is progressing...





TimeSplitters Future Perfect™

Close and personal with the game that's got 2005 all sewn up for you...

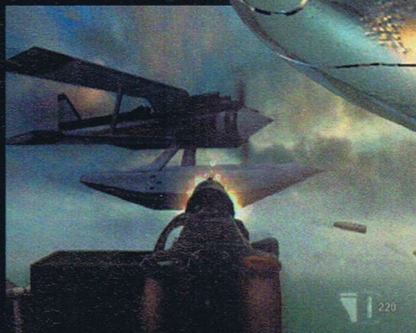
Take *Metroid Prime*'s exploration-based adventure out of the equation and Free Radical's *TimeSplitters 2* stands head and shoulders above the rest as the very best first-person shooter on Gamecube.

Naturally, every Nintendo fan is looking forward to the sequel, and when we got the chance not simply to visit Free Radical HQ but to walk away with our very own preview copy of *TimeSplitters Future Perfect*, we pondered the offer for all of ten seconds before hopping in a car and zooming up the M5 in search of Nottingham.

After a couple of days searching for the place, we got lucky. And we reckon with this game, Free Radical have hit a rich seam of gameplay gold. Here's why the future really will be perfect...

"THE BEST FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER ON GAMECUBE"

"Cortez is an identifiable action hero"





BIGGER, BETTER, MORE...

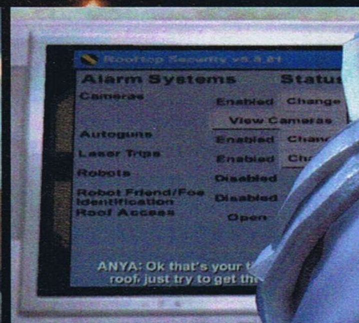
Just a small selection of the game's new, improved goodies.



MATES *Here's Harry Tipper, a funky private eye from 1969, using laser goggles to burn through some pesky bars for you. Every level has friendly characters of one sort or another, and you'll often need to protect them to make progress.*



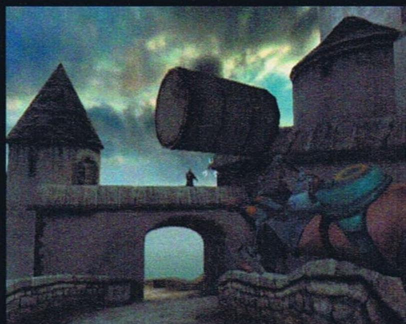
GUNMEN *Your computer-controlled allies will drive you between objectives, if you so desire, or you can take the wheel while they dish out some shootings from whatever weapon the vehicle has mounted in the back.*



COMPUTERS *Locked areas may be controlled by terminals. You can also access the guards' personal emails and turn their own auto guns on them.*



GORE *Although the zombie-style creatures are still the only ones that you can actually decapitate, every other enemy has plenty of juice to squirt at you whenever you shoot them. It isn't a* Resident Evil *of a splatter game but it's fairly bloody.*



TELEKINESIS *That thing on your wrist is a holographic map that doubles as a gravity weapon. Simply point at something you want to pick up and press the trigger. You can throw things, or keep health packs hovering until you need them.*



PUZZLES *There are plenty of the familiar switch-flipping, lever-pulling puzzles to be found, plus some interesting physical challenges. In this one you have to operate a crane to remove the gun turret from a tethered boat.*

DR DOAK SPEAKS

We met up with Free Radical co-founder and *GoldenEye* legend David Doak to talk *TimeSplitters* and chat about the company's new relationship with Electronic Arts…

What do you see as the main advantage of having the game published by EA?
TimeSplitters 2 scored tremendously well across the board. For us, we don't need much help to make the game. We want to be confident it's going to be brought to market properly, and you can't question EA's ability to do that.

Are they helping Free Radical in any kind of design way?
It's purely down to us. There's obviously collaboration on it, but *TimeSplitters* has a fairly well established identity. Part of it has been trying to make it more accessible to the mainstream. I think our British quirkiness has maybe hampered us slightly in America, and it's about making parts of the game accessible. So, for instance, the whole body-jumping discontinuity in *TimeSplitters*, we've explained that in this one.

Also, the single-player game, you play through it as Cortez all the time, and Cortez is an identifiable action hero. He's still funny, and there's quirkiness about it, but he's a bloke who dresses primarily in black, with a gun, and I think that's important. Whatever kind of fanciful ideas we might have for marketing and achieving prominence in the market are absolutely critical. It's become so, so competitive. If you have something which is seen as a fault or a flaw compared to other games then you need to do better.

How have you changed Cortez to suit the market?
He's a fuller character now. He was a bit of a mindless ox before. I think he's a fun character because he's a bit of a tongue-in-cheek action hero. He likes big guns, he likes shooting at things but he also gets in funny situations. There's a lot of funny stuff in the cut-scenes where he plays straight man while other people mess around. We've made him look a bit darker, he's got this dark body armour.

All that kind of stuff is just about being careful not to turn the mainstream away. The economics of making games now means you really have to try and target that audience. The other people won't mind if he's maybe a bit more action hero looking. We had early concept stuff where he was wearing a lighter uniform. We've kept that character in the multiplayer game, but that's the only time we've consciously tried to shape a character. All the others are as wacky and, some of them, as unmarketable as ever. There are things in there that are just completely off the wall but that's always been part of it.



"Electrocuting cyborg chimps to make them disco dance"

MORE DOAK...

Can you outline some of the main differences between this and the previous game?

The main difference, really, or the main focus of our attention, has been the story. Looking at *TimeSplitters 2*, the one thing people criticised about it was that the story wasn't really a story, it was a lot of set pieces jammed together with no explanation. What we've done in this is take Cortez as the main character and build the story around him. It also allows us to have some sensible character development – you get to know him better as you go through. Also, in terms of the quality of what people are doing later in this cycle of consoles, we had to raise our game.

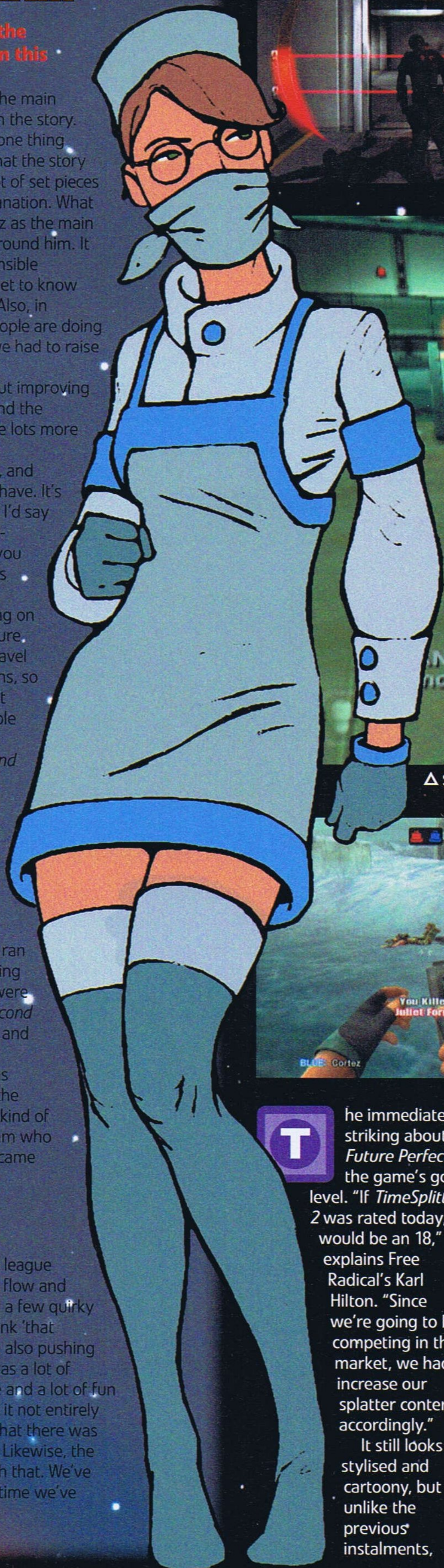
In the story levels it's all about improving the look and feel of the thing and the emotional experience. There are lots more set pieces, interaction with the backgrounds, physics going on, and generally building on what we have. It's something that, hand on heart, I'd say is a good story. It's a good time-travel yarn, with all the things you would expect from that, such as meeting yourself, and some paradox stuff. You know, verging on the Bill & Ted or Back to the Future gags. The whole idea of time travel lends itself to ludicrous situations, so that's all tidied up in the story. It was a bit galling for us for people to say we couldn't do a decent story and it was nice with *Second Sight* to say yes, we can do a good story.

Has *Second Sight* helped you in any way?

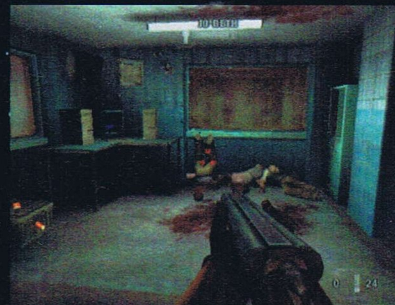
Yes, because it's all a learning experience. If you look at *TS1*, it had no cut-scenes. *TS2* had cut-scene animation but it only ran to about 20 minutes or something in the whole game. Also, they were quite simple situations. With *Second Sight*, because we had to script and manage an entire screenplay effectively, extra experience was gained in screen direction and the technicalities of managing that kind of project. All of our animation team who were working on *Second Sight* came directly to *TimeSplitters*.

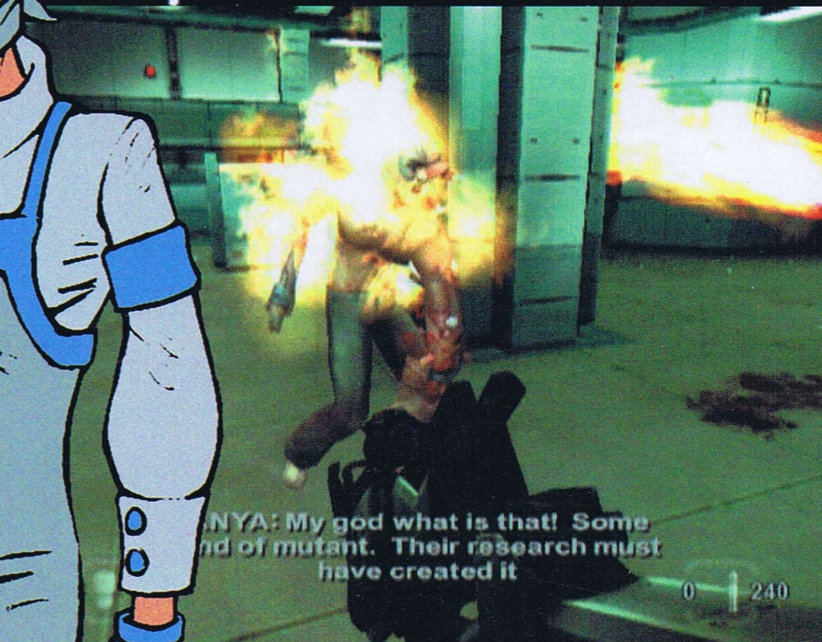
Have you kept the same basic structure as *TS2*?

Yeah, it's Story, Arcade, and the league stuff. We've tidied up the menu flow and the front end. There are always a few quirky things you look back on and think 'that should have been better.' We're also pushing the challenges because there was a lot of single-player gameplay in there and a lot of fun to be had with it, and we made it not entirely obvious from the front screen that there was stuff there to go and play with. Likewise, the mapmaker – we're keen to push that. We've made it better and better each time we've revisited it.









△ Shoot it with a tranq dart and watch it pop like a meat-filled balloon.



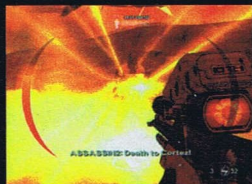


The immediately striking about *Future Perfect* is the game's gore level. "If *TimeSplitters 2* was rated today, it would be an 18," explains Free Radical's Karl Hilton. "Since we're going to be competing in that market, we had to increase our splatter content accordingly."

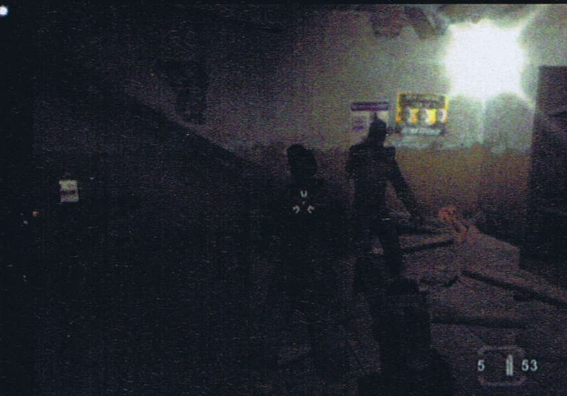
It still looks stylised and cartoony, but unlike the previous instalments, there's plenty of blood spraying around, and enemies meet some comically gruesome fates. Gunshots produce a puff of blood vapour and leave a sticky mess on the walls. Zombie heads can be blown clean off, and you can see bits of spine poking out of the wounds.

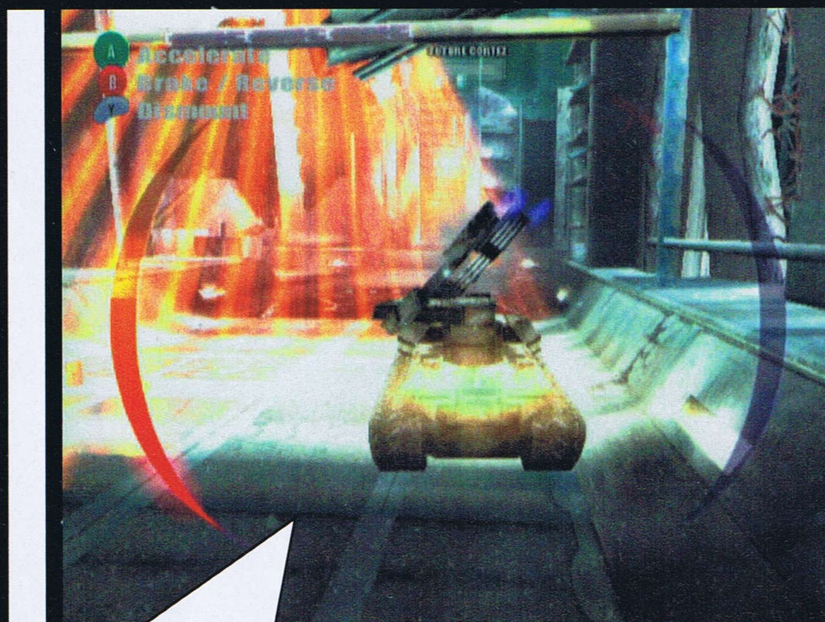
There's an area in the game, during the 1990s haunted mansion level, where previous, less fortunate explorers are suspended from the ceiling, having stepped into noose traps or fallen foul of the house's evil denizens. You can shoot them up, demonstrating the game's rag doll physics, cut them down and watch the bodies fall, or decapitate them as you see fit. And yes, you can grab hold of severed heads using the gravity gun and fling them around the place.

The violence is done with wit and imagination. One impressive sequence sees you enter a mortuary room with three autopsy tables, each with a chute leading up from it. The door locks, zombies start sliding down the chutes, and as you get to grips with the harpoon gun you just picked up, the room becomes crowded with the shambling undead, most of them stumbling around with harpoons stuck









TANKED UP

This futuristic battle tank handles in a completely different way to any other vehicle we've found so far (such as the more common buggy on the right). You have to use the two analogue sticks to move each track forwards or backwards. Pushing up on the left and down on the right makes it spin clockwise on the spot, while leaving the right stick in the neutral position makes it turn in a slow arc to the right.

through various parts of their anatomy.

Zombies sometimes come equipped to get their own back, cloaked in crackling blue electricity that makes them deadly to the touch. But they're not the most difficult enemies to tackle. A couple of levels later, in the U-Genix lab, you'll meet TimeSplitter mutants that are all but impervious to ordinary gunfire.

"GRAB HOLD OF SEVERED HEADS AND FLING THEM AROUND THE PLACE"

Luckily the lab's own guards will take care of them for a while, and a friendly scientist gives you some special tranquiliser darts which do something pretty unpleasant to the beasts' internal chemistry, making them swell to enormous proportions, then explode. Violently. You can pick up the resulting meaty chunks using the gravity gun, although quite why you'd want to walk around with a dripping lump of TimeSplitter torso floating in the air in front of you is anyone's guess.

The combat is somewhat reminiscent of the Xbox game *Halo*, which used three attack buttons to shoot a weapon, throw a grenade and smack somebody in the face with the butt of a gun. Even *Halo*'s sticky plasma grenade feature has been appropriated, allowing you to attach a fizzing blob of explosive to a bit of scenery or an enemy's head.

The use of vehicles is also *Halo*-esque. You can jump



OKEY DOAKEY…

Is it an Electronic Arts-style front end now – guiding players through the game and its unlockable content?

When we were talking to people about what they like about *TS2*, we would ask things like 'did you like the monkeys,' and they'd go 'what monkeys?' Then you'd explain to them that the monkeys were in the challenges, and if you did this, and then this, and unlocked this, then you could play the monkey melon challenge. And they'd say, 'well that sounds like a really cool thing, why did you hide it away?' I think it's because the original founders of the company came from the *GoldenEye* team, and *GoldenEye* had some pretty hard unlocks, such as the cheats. We come from a hardcore gaming background, and we thought you must have these things that are pretty hard to unlock. I think you do need to have them but you need to be careful that you don't inappropriately put exciting content too deep, because people don't have the time to go looking for it.

Maybe that's to do with the way the market has changed, you know, the age demographic has gone up. You're talking about 20-somethings playing now, that probably being the biggest part of the market. They want to play it but they don't have 40 hours to sit and unlock something. They want to come back from the pub or whatever, or back from work and have a blast on it and feel that they're making some progress. It's just about trying to be more market-savvy, really.

Are there still lots of monkeys in there?

Yes. The monkeys have evolved slightly. We've got a cyborg monkey, a ninja monkey and a zombie monkey. It's one of those things – somebody just juxtaposes the two words one day and it has to happen, you can't shake it.

Have you come up with any challenges for the game?

I haven't personally because there's a team of perfectly creative people working on it and it would be a conceit for me to go and impose things on it. My role is just about trying to be an objective voice and saying this is working, this isn't working, if you try this we won't have time to do that.

Do you have a favourite?

There's a disco challenge which involves electrocuting cyborg chimps to make them dance. It's a kind of complicated plate-spinning arrangement.

How did the game's unique visual style come about?

That kind of thing has always been part of the *TimeSplitters* brand, and that was what we set out to do at the start. I always look at *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*. The multiplayer was constrained in terms of look by the characters, which were these military characters from a military game. When we started Free Radical, we wanted to do something that was bright and colourful and had variety in it, and that was how *TimeSplitters* was born. It was called *MPG* at the time – multiplayer game. We wanted to have a variety of locations, and our lame way of explaining it was time travel. With this one we finally managed to justify that because the main story actually provides a good footing for it, but that was where it came from.

How has the mapmaker changed?

It's still blocks. The first thing we changed was the way the blocks fitted together, with two types of plugs. We noticed that when people built something with it, the shape was dictated by the tiles. You'd stick four of them down and then realise there was only really…



DOs AND DOAKs...

[continued] ...this one that would fit in the middle. The plugs forced you to build a certain way. We've made it so there's only one type of plug, and now you can offset them and build a continuous space, so that makes a big difference. There are also stackable tiles that allow you to make vertical spaces. Previously it was difficult to build a map that had any kind of sniping potential or cubbyholes that overlooked, so you can do that now.

Then the whole game logic and the story stuff, that's been particularly championed by myself and Steve [Ellis, Free Radical co-founder], because it's a feature which we like a lot. *TimeSplitters Future Perfect* will be our chance to find out if it's a feature the market likes a lot. In *TS2* we had implemented it but it was a bit hidden away, a bit difficult to use because it was a bit programmery in the way it was presented. It had to be, because of the nature of what it is. Now we've extended the story logic to allow you to build assault maps. An assault map is a team-based objective map, and all of the logic is there to do it. You can put your attacker and defender team starts, objectives like destroy an object or flip a switch, open a door, neutralise some great big gun.

In *TS2*, people had great fun making levels that looked a bit like their *GoldenEye* favourites. Did you design any of the tile sets to look like *GoldenEye* or any other FPS game?

Not really. We tried to make them just distinguishable from each other, so we've got the horror one, the Egyptian one, a virtual reality one this time, and this kind of spy-fi thing. The *GoldenEye* thing really interests me because those maps, things like Facility or whatever, you get people saying 'this was an absolutely fantastic map,' and 'you must have put a lot of work into it.' We didn't put any work into it, that was just the way it was built. It's funny how the familiarity with the thing in terms of the deathmatch layout is almost in people's heads. If it's not flawed badly in some way, the familiarity is what makes it good – I like playing this map because I know it back to front, I know where all the spawns are, I can kill someone and from watching their screen tell where they are and start manoeuvring to be there. I always find it really funny when people say those maps were amazing. With *TS* we've got a thing with the Chinese level, which was in the first one, came back in the second one, and we're going to bring it back again because everyone I talk to asks if we're going to bring that one back. It's a map which is probably intrinsically quite good but the familiarity thing gets the result.

Have you seen the new *GoldenEye*?

I've not seen it. We did say if they wanted to pay us we'd be really expensive consultants but we were never involved.

You really haven't seen anything of it?

I don't know, I don't want to get in trouble. Let's just say I wouldn't like to be making *GoldenEye 2*, because it's become such a rose-tinted, pedestal thing, it would be really difficult to do it. I think the Bond licence is quite hard to work with because the Bond films are changing. At the time, MGM came along to look at *GoldenEye* and said it was too violent. We said to them, 'have you watched something like Dr No?' Here's Bond, here's somebody he's talking to, and he just shoots them. That's what he does in the books, he can shoot innocent bystanders because, guess what, he's got a licence to kill. He's allowed to kill people, with no repercussions, completely amorally. But they've changed it now because it's time to be careful.



△ Cortez's girlie friend's skimpy attire is the butt (ahem) of many an upskirt gag. Well, one. Or two.



△ A harpooned zombie. Incidentally, the zombies left emails on the computer terminals, the gist of most being: braaaains!



into a number of different cars, trucks or buggies, and if the vehicle has a weapon mounted on the back, you can choose which seat you want to get in. That way it's possible to have the computer or another player drive you around while you man the gun and blast at anything that moves.

Vehicles tend to handle like cars in a driving game, except for certain special ones like the tank, which has separate analogue sticks for each track. The default first-person controls have abandoned the old *GoldenEye* scheme, whereby you had to hold a shoulder button to bring up the aiming target, in favour of the system used by most other videogames. Now the target reticule is fixed in the centre of the screen at all times. You can change it back to the old way if you prefer, as the controls can be totally customised.

Customisation is a big part of the game, thanks to an astonishingly detailed mapmaker mode that allows you to do practically anything short of designing your own geometry and textures. You can now build vertically, stacking blocks up to five levels deep to create huge, open spaces with sniper hideouts at the top. And Free Radical are considering increasing the maximum height to seven for the finished game.

The mapmaker tiles can be joined together in almost

> "HAVE THE COMPUTER DRIVE WHILE YOU BLAST ANYTHING THAT MOVES"

DO IT YOURSELF

The expanded mapmaker mode could potentially extend the game's lifespan far beyond ordinary first-person shooters. When you run out of built-in challenges, designing a few of your own is a rewarding experience thanks to these flexible, user-friendly tools.



■ Link up your tiles any way you like, add lighting, add game logic, add objectives…

■ Add a radio controlled cat, if you want. Or a few barrels you can pick up and throw. Lovely.



△ In the future they certainly know how to build scary guns. This one is slow to reload but packs an RCP90-style punch. Oh yes.



△ More tank action. You can just roll over enemies.



△ This electric gun makes robots' arms fall off. Yikes!



△ Three scenes from one of the Scottish levels set in 1924. Shooting the switch lowers a drawbridge; getting close to the castle gates in the back of a rickety old truck; more enjoyably random slaughter.

any way you see fit, and the software is smart enough to convert a cluster of multiple identical blocks into one enormous room. You can even take the roof off, exposing parts of your map to whatever weather conditions you want to apply. It will still have walls, but the open-top feel adds welcome variety.

There are six themed tile sets to choose from: Abstract; Egyptian; Laboratory; Military; Horror; and Virtual Reality. Some sets are more detailed than others, and if you've used one of the more elaborate themes in a very large map containing too many objects, it might start to slow down a bit. Switching to a simpler theme will fix the problem.

When you've created a basic space, you can populate it with weapons, toys, vehicles and computer-controlled bots. Add an enemy soldier, give him a gun, set a few waypoints… and you've got a guard patrolling part of your level. You can add a little message that pops up on the screen when you shoot him, and maybe unlock a door elsewhere in the level, or trigger more guards to spawn. Pretty soon you'll have something approaching a single-player story level, complete with mission objectives.

Game logic is programmed using a reasonably simple menu system, and as long as you can handle the concept of 'if event X happens then trigger event Y,' you'll have no trouble making something unique and entertaining. Ten example maps will be included with the game, demonstrating what's possible. The team at Free Radical are currently having fun designing racing levels where players can tear around the course using remote-control cats, so there's clearly much more to it than just shooting things.

ONLY DOAKING…

Will you be supporting HDTV and all that high-end visual stuff?

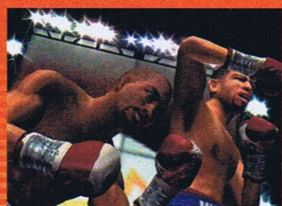
One thing I think is really strange about consoles is they still ship with the lowest quality AV connections. I don't know, if it was my business I'd probably ship it with a low quality connection as well, then sell a better one for 25 quid. But from a development point of view that does actually create a real problem. With on-screen text and stuff, your clarity is always limited by the lowest quality connections. Even on the N64, we had it hooked up with something quite good but someone would tell us, 'that text is too small.' I could read it, but then they'd plug it into the other thing at the back of the TV and they'd be right, we couldn't ship it like that. I continually have people asking if we'll be supporting all these fancy HDTV modes. We'll support what we consider to be the most important thing. We have finite resources and we don't want to divert resources into the wrong thing.

You've hooked up with a giant like EA, which can guarantee you a good retail presence. What do you think about the pressure retailers can put on developers?

Digital distribution is the future. One of the great untold things about this industry is that the retailers have a disproportionate amount of power. They make a lot of money and they don't seem to take a lot of risk. As a consumer it's great when you see something discounted in the first week, but the reality of that is that the loss goes straight back to the developer. I don't see what their risk is because they have everything on sale-or-return. They also dabble in this second-hand market, which undermines everything. If you look back to the '80s and the retail price of games compared to the cost of development, you could probably say those guys weren't doing much work and they were driving Ferraris. The developers were getting away with it. But now it costs a lot to run a 40- or 50-person team for a couple of years to make something. Take *Second Sight*, for example. I'm very proud of the game but it's certainly not *TS2* in terms of sales.



PREVIEWS



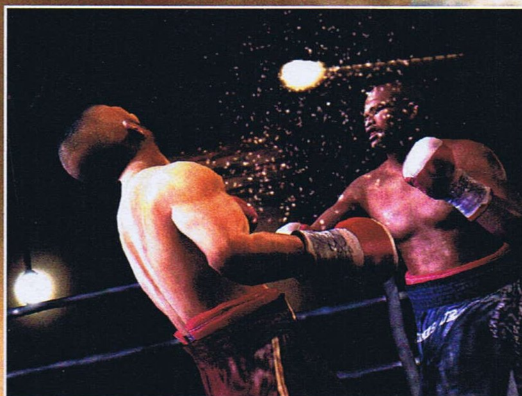
THE KNOWLEDGE

- Licensed boxer roster (this *is* an EA Sports game).
- Great Create-a-boxer mode.
- Detailed training options.
- C-stick punching system.
- Sharp graphics.

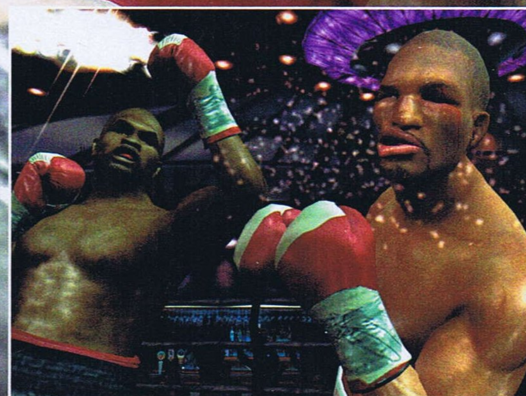
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
EA Sports

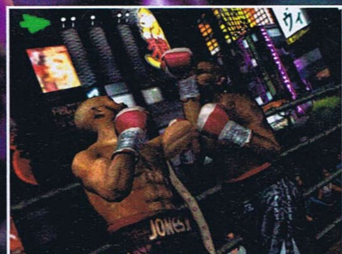
What have they done before?
Knockout Kings 2003 (NGC/75 79%)
A much weightier, more dynamic package than *Rocky*.

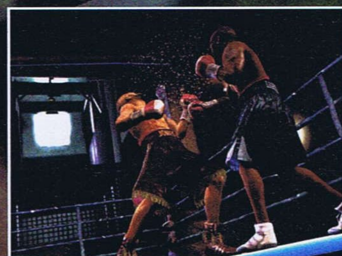


△ Ooshka! Who needs a good clean fight? Not us. Lamp him.



△ Ooh. Where am I? Everyfink's gone rashberry. Tuesday. 333?


△ The longer you hold the C-stick back, the heavier your punch.


△ The most realistic boxing game on Gamecube. Just look at those tassels.

FIGHT NIGHT 2005

Eat my fist! EA's new king of the ring packs more punch than a herd of Italian Stallions.


Gamecube isn't exactly the system of choice for the boxing enthusiast. In fact, if you're partial to a bit of sparring you're better off with a GBA. But what the home system lacks in quantity, it makes up for in quality. Just. *Rocky's* an entertaining arcade knockabout, while EA's more sim-like *Knockout Kings* delivers realistic pain with all the force of an Amir Khan blow to the spuds.

Fight Night 2005 doesn't break EA's boxing mould, delivering bruising scraps in the ring, a solid Career mode and a stunning create-a-boxer mode. The latter feature really captures the imagination, with traditional sliders for the various attributes abandoned in favour of a system that uses the analogue sticks to manipulate the features of your fighter. It's like shaping clay.

Elsewhere, the graphics don't disappoint. The arenas – from the hicksville fairground you start out in to the voluminous Staples Center – are richly detailed, individual muscle groups on the boxers flex with margarine smoothness and facial damage is presented with Holby City A&E dept. levels of gore. There's even a feature where you can treat your boxer's wounds, rocking the analogue stick left and right in time with a moving bar in order to heal cuts and cool swellings.

If you're to get anywhere in *Fight Night* though, you'll need to begin a rigorous training regime. You can sculpt your upcoming star in a variety of ways – make them skinnier, more muscular, go for a more substantial fat to muscle ratio to make them a bloater with fists the size of udders… your route to stardom doesn't have to be the traditional one. Crucially, by looking at the physical make up of an opponent before you somersault onto the canvas you can gauge their fighting style. It's a much more tactical game than any of the others currently out there in this respect. Age even plays a substantial part, with you taking your character from lean learner to bulked out pro, and on to burger-chugging has-been.

So far, we're impressed by what *Fight Night 2005* has to offer. Expect more coverage next issue…

> **"DELIVERS REALISTIC PAIN WITH THE FORCE OF AN AMIR KHAN BLOW TO THE SPUDS"**

NGC VERDICT

UK SPRING | US TBC | JAPAN TBC



Blends an intuitive control system – where nudging the C-stick round to the left or right unleashes attacking and blocking moves of various degrees of power – with bitingly crisp visuals and tactical decision making. Gamecube fight fans have never had it so good. If only EA could apply this much progression to their 007 series…

ANTICIPATION RATING



TWO'S COMPANY...

Everything anyone's played of *Resi 4* so far has merely been a taster, a single-character starter before the Ashley-and-Leon-fuelled main course. What's for pudding, Capcom?



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Brand-new direction for the Resi series – there's a real 3D environment for a start…
- Play as both Leon Kennedy and Ashley Gardner.
- New 'Action Button' – press A during on-screen prompt for context-sensitive move.
- The chance to sell treasure to a wandering merchant in order to level up your current weapon and buy new ones.
- Entire game presented in widescreen ratio.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Capcom (Production Studio 4)

What have they done before?
Viewtiful Joe (NGC/84 90%)
Brilliantly different side-scrolling batter-'em-up.





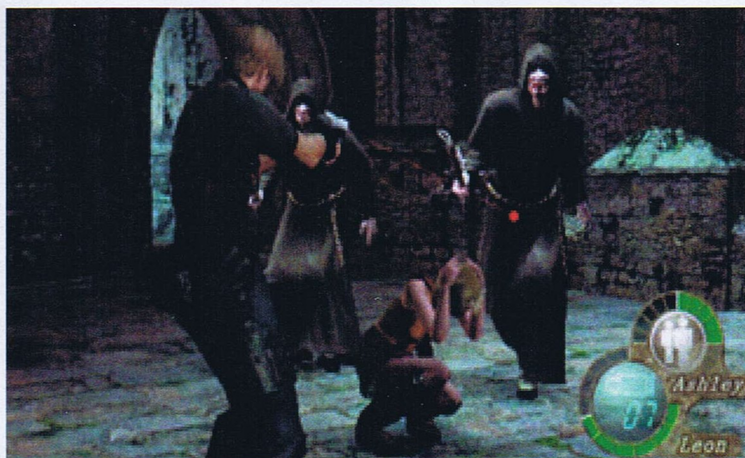
△ Only the pair of you can overcome some obstacles. Press A now…







△ … She gets up there only to want to jump down again. Girls, eh? Tsk…



RESIDENT EVIL 4

US gamers will be playing this in a matter of weeks. Lucky them, eh? Lucky. Old. Them.



If you've been following **NGC**'s class-leading coverage of *Resident Evil 4* so far, you'll know all about Leon Kennedy being sent to a remote village in a place that looks not too dissimilar to Spain, on the trail of Ashley Graham, missing daughter of the US President. You'll know that – yes – Leon does find her (and will end up being separated from her again). You'll know they meet up with an ex-cop (at least, that's what he tells you) called Luis, pictured left. They get hunted down by villagers intent on using their heads for meaty stew and a bunch of mad monks – Los Iluminados – desperate to get Ashley back. You'll know just how absorbing this game is, and how it's going to change the face of survival horror. Again.

This month we've got hold of a fresh batch of shots from Capcom revealing more of how Leon and Ashley's relationship works (as well as one showing Leon face down in a smear of blood, which doesn't help at all).

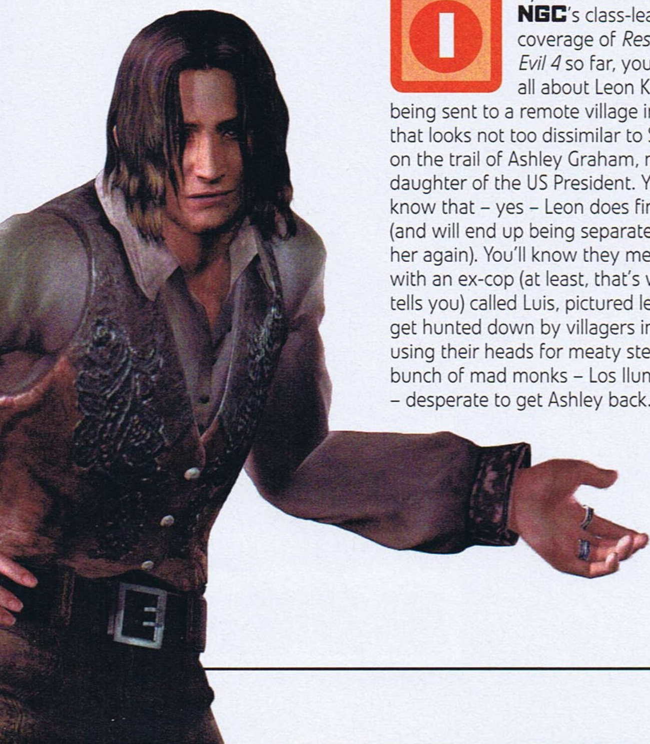
The key to to success is co-operation. Once you've rescued Ashley, her health meter appears above Leon's. It's your job to make sure she stays healthy (even though she coughs up blood now and then). Wandering around the trap-filled castle level, you'll need to operate stealthily to protect the young girl. If the cloaked, mace-wielding members of Los Iluminados catch a whiff of her pure girl stink, they'll come running, hit you as a group and try and steal her away over a bony shoulder. Let them do this, and you lose, *loser*.

If Ashley sheds all her health it's also Game Over (man). As Leon, you've got your work cut out. Even when you break off to control Ashley as she explores the game's environments alone, we're sure he's stood tutting in the shadows.

Leon's not the only visitor to foreign shores either – we can confirm that the mystery woman, clad in a tight red dress, who we revealed a couple of issues ago, is indeed Ada Wong! The mighty Wong! Capcom have even issued a screenshot **NGC** took for issue 100 as part of the revelation.

> **"THE MYSTERY WOMAN, CLAD IN A TIGHT RED DRESS, IS ADA WONG"**

Who's she working for? What are they after? Does that mean Wesker will turn up as well? Questions that'll be answered in just a few weeks…



PAIR RAGE

One minute you're holding hands, the next you're torn apart…

STICK TOGETHER

If Ashley gets snatched away, that's it. You've failed in your mission to protect the President's daughter and must face the consequences (or maybe just hit Reset). It'll be more stressful having to watch out for Ashley and take care of yourself, but sometimes Leon needs Ashley's small stature to reach inaccessible areas…





I AM A LADY

We've yet to see Ashley with a weapon, so, during the levels where you control her alone, you have to make do with objects you find in the environment (presumably she's going to hurl this straight in the face of the lumbering monk). We imagine things'll be a bit less hectic when you're playing as the lady…

OLD FRIENDS

Here's Leon, off on his tod again (Ashley's probably painting her nails or looking for the loo or something). So it's 'proper' Resi time. Even the typewriters are back – and just like in previous Resis, you use them to save your game. Thankfully, you won't need to find ink ribbons in order to record your progress for posterity.





△ Ashley's face and health meter reveals her pain. If she gives up the ghost, that's the end of your adventure. Best be a nice chap and stop shooting her, eh, Leon?



△ Did Leon drown in his own gore or die of shock from blood loss? either way, it's got to be a nasty way to go.

WONG TURN

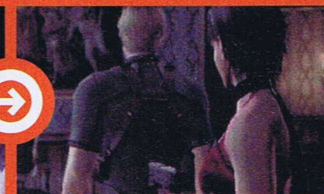
Official! Ada Wong *is* in *Resi 4* (as we guessed in **NGC**/100)…





ADA ENOUGH YET? Ada is one of the true Resi fan's favourite characters – just ask Geraint. He just can't get enough of her (ever since Wesker's Reports revealed that he rescued her – another 'agent' from certain death at the end of *Resi 2*, he's been gagging for her return…)





IF I ADA 'AMMER She's looking good in *Resi 4*, although she hardly gives the man she shared a bit of sexual chemistry with a warm welcome. Gun in the back, is it? Give us your arm, you filthy mare…





NGC VERDICT

UK MARCH | US 11TH JAN | JAPAN 27TH JAN



Bloodier than any previous Resi, more action-packed and nerve-twangingly intense, this is a game which'll raise the benchmark. We've tried coming up with possible problems, any features that'll end up frustrating us – but it really is hard. It plays fluidly, packs plenty of replay value (always a concern) and shocks your brain to its nuts.

ANTICIPATION RATING



NEW YEAR, NEW GAMES, NEW GAMESMASTER!

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HALO 2 GUIDE! Full walkthru + online tips

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△ That's one big bird (or an extremely small ape)...


△ As much lava as you can eat. Now all we need's some snow...


△ Northern Lights? Load of borealis. Ha-hur.


△ Trouble seeing? Watch the big DK.

DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT

Recycle those bongos for a cross-country ape rescue.

You know, sometimes it's hard to keep an open mind. Over the years we've seen enough 'me too' games to last a lifetime. Bandwagon jumpers clinging to the hope of generating a few sales off the back of one innovative title. Sometimes playing games doesn't seem the rewarding pastime it should be.

Which is why we applaud Nintendo for breathing new life into a peripheral that seemed doomed to gather dust once you'd gone off *Donkey Konga*. Regular readers will know that you use the bongos to control Donkey Kong in this side-scrolling platformer. It's not as unwieldy as it sounds.

Hit the left or right skins to make DK move in the respective direction. Slapping them both together makes him jump, while clapping (or tapping the side of the drums) makes the stinking ape lash out with a punch. You'll soon work out combos where moves link together in one spectacular blur of sprints, leaps and spins – and these bring you the most points as well. Boss encounters certainly give you a real workout. It's definitely the best way we've seen to keep fit with your Gamecube.

And it's a pleasing experience for your eyes as well. Beautifully rendered BIG enemies. A camera that zooms in and out to capture every last drop of detail. Lovely. Could be a sleeper hit, this...





THE KNOWLEDGE

- Controls designed around the *Donkey Konga* bongos.
- Chain together moves to create points-building combos.
- Collect bananas and baby apes.
- Ride other animals and vehicles.
- Really weak story: "Brave the dangers of the jungle to rescue DK's simian pals!" Jesus.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Nintendo

What have they done before?
Mario Kart Double Dash!! (NGC/88 93%)
Recent winner of Gamecube game of the year at the Golden Joystick Awards. Skill!

NGC VERDICT

UK 4TH FEB | US 14TH MAR | JAPAN OUT NOW



It might seem a bit gimmicky, a cheap extra for those Konga drums, but it's actually much more fun and rewarding than you might expect. In fact, it's *incredibly* addictive. The tap-tap-tap-CLAP control system really captures the imagination and gives this routine platform romp a real edge. We're suckers for inventiveness like this...

ANTICIPATION RATING



△ Hulk SMASH! As you'd expect (and probably demand) you can pick up cars and throw them around as if they were as light as apples. Watch them crumble…

HULK 2

There's no sign of David Banner in the 2005 sequel. Just 100% prime Hulk smashing all the way…



△ It's one big Hulk theme park full of real people to blat with your fists.

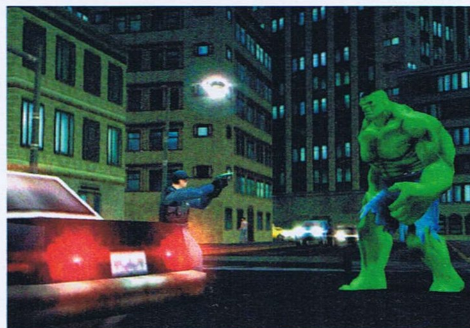
First of all, we need to make it clear that the *Hulk 2* code Vivendi recently showed us was very, very early. That said, at the moment it's bloody similar to *Spider-Man 2*. You can see from these first screenshots that it's set in a free-roaming city full of towering skyscrapers and citizens looking for a pasting. Hell, there's even a glimpse of Hulk climbing a building. But following the lead of one of the best superhero games in years is no bad thing.

The developers have set out to give you a real sense of Hulk's power this time. The first Hulk title on Gamecube suffered from being a repetitive, relentless scrapper that would have scored more highly if it had deviated at any point from the template laid down in its first level. Now, though, you'll be swatting away enemies, leaping huge distances, tearing cars in half and using the two pieces as giant metal boxing gloves and ripping up lamp posts and using them as clubs, before taking your anger out on buildings and 'sidewalks'. We even saw Hulk rip a missile launcher off the back of a lorry, sling it over his shoulder and proceed to hurl the explosives out himself. The fool.

Naturally, giving Hulk the run of a full city means that there are more options open to you at any one time, plus it allows you to revisit the destruction you've wreaked on the poor town (all the damage you cause stays in place).

All this seems to go some way to making Hulk a more rounded character. Vivendi are taking this idea further still, with the chance for you to upgrade the mean, green, fighting machine (yes, again, a bit like *Spider-Man 2*). You can improve areas like throwing, combos and movement abilities, allowing you to model your own particular breed of viridian man-ogre.


△ Hurling around cars and trucks and stuff – rack 'em up like dominoes and send them crunching down the street.


△ A little man with a tiny gun shouldn't pose much of a threat to you – crush him as if he were made of biscuits.

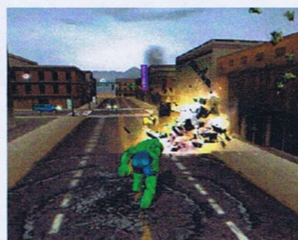

△ It's a bit unclear from this angle, but it looks as if Hulk's actually got hold of this jet fighter and is about to pound the buildings into dust with it. Perhaps he'll steal its weapons and use those instead. He's only playing, after all…


△ Look at that scar – Hulk's already caused damage to this building. Is he trying to cuddle it better?


△ Grab the missiles and fling them about like explosive dog chews. Awww, who's a good liddle green boy..?








△ "Do you like my wig? Under here, I'm as smooth as Matt Lucas, you know…"

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI 2

Say that with a mouthful of fist.

If you're serious about your DBZ, well, you'll probably have already played this on a rival system. But – for the US at least – Atari have confirmed that, finally, *Budokai 2* is going to be made available on Gamecube. As we go to press there's no confirmation of a UK release, and, being realistic, we're not sure it'll ever make it.

This sequel offers a new 'Dragon mode' single-player experience (featuring brand new matchups, missions and the like), plus the usual Vs and Tournament modes. It's supposed to be the most challenging DBZ in years, with a final showdown with Buu, toughest fighter of the lot.

To be honest, the majority of us aren't that taken with the current crop of DBZ titles, so it's hard to get too excited for this.



△ "Eat my dirty shoes, my friend!" "Delicious! Kick me again… *harder*."


△ Crispy anime cel-shaded looks, for sure. But will this be a real heavyweight?

NEW KIRBY ADVENTURE

He's pink, he stinks, he's… sssh, he's coming back…

Nintendo have just released the first-ever shots of a brand new Kirby title for Gamecube. We were – how can we put it? – a little underwhelmed by HAL Laboratories' last Kirby game (*Kirby Air Ride* – 51% in **NGC**/85), and we went from accepting the pink one to wanting to pap his stupid punch-worthy face in. However, we'll give him the benefit of the doubt.

This game'll feature support for up to four players – and perhaps it'll take a similar route as GBA's *Kirby and the Amazing Mirror*, which featured a four-Kirby system. *Interesting*. Expect a release later in 2005…









△ Kirby appears to do his usual things in this new title – opening his fat mouth, gliding with an umbrella, swimming, assaulting anyone who gets in his way…

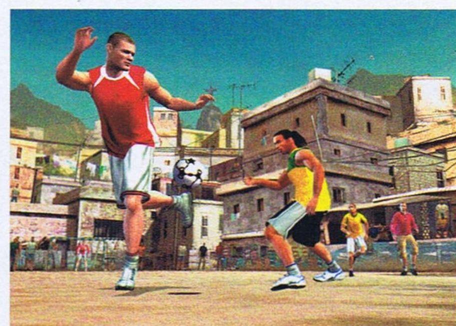
FIFA STREET

The biggest football franchise gets down with the kids…

We revealed this last issue, and we've managed to secure a couple of exclusive new shots for you this month (it's amazing what a slab of lard, EA HQ's air vents and Geraint in his stinking undercrackers can 'secure'). This is one FIFA game we're really looking forward to, thanks to the fact that the big glossy brute's being stripped down to its bare essentials, it's got a rethunk control system and the fact that the other titles in the Street range have gone spuds-out to entertain. Oh, who are we trying to kid? Look – it's Wayne Rooney! On the dusty streets of Rio and everything! The release date's to be confirmed, but we'd reckon a late spring release won't be out of the question…



△ Paaf! Four-on-four action keeps the action pacy.



△ Jazz hands. Our Wayne's never looked so good…



Looks a bit uninspiring, does this place. And the action's about to get ugly…

NFL STREET 2

Yo! Pass me the ball you mother before I break yo' ass! (Cheers!)

So what does *NFL Street 2* have that the first game didn't? It features NFL Star Jeremy Shockey and hip-hop star Xzibit on the cover, for a kick off. Which sounds very cool and urban and that.

Gameplay-wise it's as you'd expect – a few tweaks to the formula cooked up at the beginning of this year. You can run off the walls (which sounds a little unfair) and make use of 'eye-popping' wall jukes and new hurdles. "Once you own the walls, you will own the city," say EA. Right on! Er.

You'll need to make the most of the ten new Bay City environments in order to build up your team and, of course, your rep. If EA get any more down with the kids, they'll be eating jello and getting hickies round the back of the skateboard park.

As we're going to press we've just got a preview build in. Looks very smooth, we have to say. It's out at the end of January…







Thankfully, you'll be able to unlock Toadette pretty swiftly. Feel better now?

MARIO PARTY 6

You know the score by now. Let's say 74%, eh? Ha-hah.

The main reason to get involved with this Mario Party, ignoring the new Gamecube mic it's compatible with for a second, is the selection of new minigames it offers. There are around 70 fresh ones here, ranging from building a robot to dodging a ray of light. It's typical Mario Party stuff and, looking at the screenshots Nintendo have dished out, you could be forgiven for thinking you were seeing last year's version, or the year before that, or the year before… you get the picture. But yes, at least Nintendo are giving away a free microphone with the sixth Party. Trouble is, we're really unconvinced it's going to add anything new – a control system that could quite happily sit on a joypad? Hmm. Early reports from the US where it's on sale now aren't good. But, like with Kirby's new game, we'll give it the benefit of the doubt. 'Tis the season to be jolly, after all. Expect us to return to normal whinging next issue in the review…





DONKEY KONGA 3

A bongo too far? They must be scraping the barrel (heh-heh) for the third instalment (due out in Japan in '2005'). And guess who's joining Donkey and Diddy this time? Yes, your friend and ours, Funky Kong. Expect him to star in a few of the new minigames as well as making an appearance in the main game itself. Likelihood of making it out over here? Flimsy.



The in-game graphics don't reach this level of sophistication. Shame.

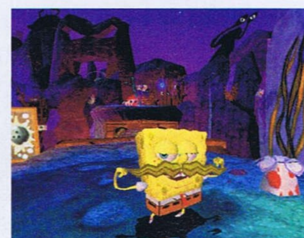
STREET RACING SYNDICATE

Nintendo will be handling the release of Namco's Brit-developed urban racer (which was due to be published by 3DO until they went na-night…) It features 40 licensed cars and three US cities to floor them around, but we think it's got a tough job on its hands up against the might of *Need for Speed Underground*. The UK release date's still TBC – so let's say March. Yes.



TAK 2

This time round, Tak gets to explore a game spread across two 'worlds' – the real one and a dream one (picture above). It brings back some of the favourite features of the first game (interacting with the animals, mainly), as well as turning Tak's mentor into a flea who you can then use to help solve puzzles (making animals scratch, that kind of thing). *Tak 2'll* be out in March – and shouldn't be too bad, really…



SPONGEBOB THE MOVIE

We've got a copy of this in the office at the moment, but it's fair to say that it's hardly touched our Gamecubes. It's just a bit simple for our tastes. Run about, jump and collect stuff, help SpongeBob become more macho… It's tied in with the release of the film in February, and it's fair to say that we *can* wait.

OVER 20 PAGES OF DS &

NEW!

N·GC POCKET

FOR HANDHELD GAMERS

NINTENDO DS. GAME BOY ADVANCE

REVIEWED THIS ISSUE!



METROID HUNTERS

We rate the amazing demo you get free! P.48



FEEL THE MAGIC

The sauciest use of the touch screen so far. Rub away… P.49

IT'S-A-HIM!

Mario launches Nintendo DS in the US and Japan! Get our unrivalled verdict on the game that rewrites history…



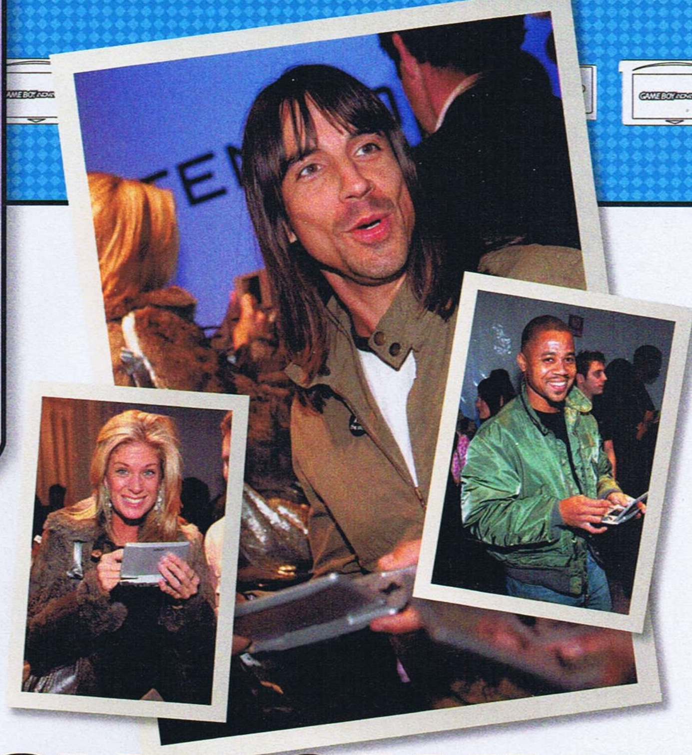
PLUS!



- Your eight-page guide to the portable system everyone wants!
- The latest news on the incredible DS sales in the US.
- Reviews of Spider-Man 2, Asphalt GT, The Urbz and more!
- We take DS out on the streets to gauge the verdict of real gamers.

NGC POCKET

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS



▷ Anthony Kiedis, Rachel Hunter and Cuba Gooding Jr. were all on hand for DS' star-studded launch. Reggie certainly has some celebrity friends – or maybe he scared them into going.

WELCOME TO NGC POCKET...

So here we are again. You might remember us running a similar handheld-dedicated section a few years ago – 'Planet Game Boy' – which passed away with dignity back in **NGC**/66.

But now is the time for resurrection. There are, once again, two Nintendo handhelds vying for your attention and, as you can see, the sheer weight of news and reviews flowing tidal-wave-like through the office is enough to warrant a separate home for it all.

This issue, we've managed to squeeze in reviews of every DS launch title from the States, as well as the biggest new GBA releases for the UK. We've also got a comprehensive guide to the hardware itself (full of the detail only an **NGC** hands-on can provide). If it's not in there, it's not worth knowing. But, er... if you do have any questions, do email us.

As you read this, the dust will be settling on the DS launch campaign in Japan. Next issue, we'll bring you reviews of the different launch games – including the fantastic *Wario Ware*, which the system seems designed for.

This is a hugely important time for Nintendo – in the face of stiff competition, they need to prove they can still deliver the best portable entertainment. We'll be following them every step of the way...

Geraint Rhys-Evans, Handyman



NGC POCKET, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath. BA1 2BW
Issue 1, January 2005
Editor: The Welsh Wonder
Contributors: Hippy bum layabout boy, Red 'em up Kittsy, The Blue Flash, Tarzan the Ape Man

TOUCHDOWN!

Nintendo DS sells even faster than predicted – and GBA goes like hot cakes.

So it's finally here then. In under a year, DS has gone from cryptic 'third-pillar' announcement to touchable, playable, *buyable* hardware – surely a record turnaround for Nintendo. Best of all, the payoff has been even better than Nintendo originally anticipated. They've upped their world-wide sales expectations from an optimistic 3.5 million units shifted by March 2005 to a phenomenal 5 million. Early indications show that they'll probably meet that target too.

In the first week of release in the US Nintendo sold an impressive 500,000 units, and with DS already three weeks old in Japan, they'll far exceed the planned 1 million sales by the time the year's out. (Stop Press: they just have.) Early predictions that DS would suffer the same fate as the unfortunate Virtual Boy, then, are unlikely to come true. Which is good news for Nintendo, and means we'll have plenty to talk about for the next few years.

As ever, Reggie Fils-Aime was on hand to deliver some choice words for the post US launch press release, stating that Nintendo 'owns' the handheld market and that the DS was both 'hot', and the 'hit' of the holiday season. Curiously, the same statement from Nintendo pointed out that it took Apple's iPod 19 months to achieve similar sales – a truly daft comparison to make if ever we saw one (you didn't need £1,000 worth of Mac computer to play DS at launch, for example) but there you go.

Oh, and it might also interest you to know that GBA, in the same week, racked up an even more impressive 800,000 sales. That makes 1.3 million handheld sales for Nintendo in the US alone. In just one week. They must be raking it in.

DS AD WATCH

United Screens of America.



△ Pictochat without a DS – it's just not the same. Colder, for starters.

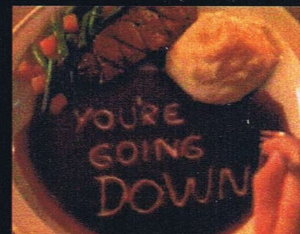


△ Issue challenges in the most unexpected places – look right!

Continuing our look at Nintendo's worldwide DS marketing push we've got three of Nintendo of America's TV commercials for your perusal. Made by the agency Leo Burnett USA, they're more 'mature', classy and understated in flavour than the Japanese adverts – and they subtly demonstrate the wireless and touch and dual screen features of the unit.

Our favourites show strangers challenging each other to a multiplayer game by drawing messages in their food (there are no Gordon Ramsay-style expletives, though), and a ghostly response appearing in the icy condensation on a window. Here's hoping DS gets a similarly effective treatment in the UK.

You can watch all three US television ads at http://www.leoburnett.com/breaking/nintendo/ds.htm

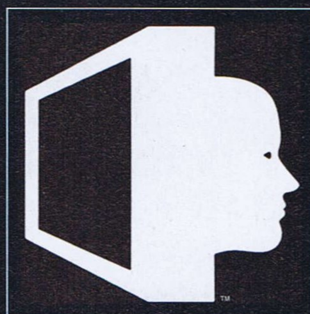


DS ONLINE?

Why wait for Nintendo..?

It's the question that's been on everyone's lips – when, if ever, will DS go online? In a recent interview with Famitsu, Shigeru Miyamoto hinted that it may not be as long as we think. While talking about Nintendo's general online strategy, Miyamoto hinted that their plans will probably come to fruition within the next 'three to four years'. However, he then went on to predict that DS will be online far sooner than that.

Miyamoto also implied that Square-Enix may be one of the parties involved in establishing DS's online presence. It's worth pointing out that Square-Enix were partly responsible for Sony's PlayOnline service and so it's not unlikely that Square are already working on a similar service with Nintendo. According to Miyamoto, there'll be some kind of hint as to how this will work in the forthcoming *Animal Crossing DS*...



GET ON WITH IT!

It seems that many DS owners are impatient to get the online ball rolling and aren't waiting for Nintendo to do it. Spicious.com, Darkain.com and the forum community at Gbadev.org have managed to intercept and capture data packets between two communicating DSs and are currently working towards a solution to get DS online. Also, Warppipe.com, the folk behind the Gamecube's tunnelling software – a means of getting LAN-enabled GC games online – have another, DS-related project in the works. Apparently, this won't be a tunnelling project like Warp Pipe, but something else going under the codename 'DemaSked'. Try googling for it and you'll find a bewildering amount of surreal clues to decipher.



DS TV TUNER

Peripheral lunacy ahoy!

According to Japanese publication Nintendo Dream, Agatsum Entertainment will be producing a TV tuner peripheral for DS. Scheduled for release in Japan early next year, the device will work with both GBA and DS, attaching itself to the handhelds via the GBA cartridge slot. We'd be lying if we said we were excited, to be honest – the device is pretty hefty and requires a four AAA batteries to work. In our experience, these things never actually pan out particularly well. Sega's Game Gear had a similar device that worked okay, but Blaze's GBA TV tuner was absolute rubbish. So rubbish in fact that we couldn't get a picture out of it at all. Maybe we'll be proved wrong with this one – but we're not holding our breath.

FAULTY DS SCREENS

Covered by the guarantee in the US. Importers beware!

A number of DS adopters in the US have reportedly discovered, to their horror, that some DS screens have dead pixels in them – dots on the screen that are frozen on a particular colour. It's a common problem with LCD screens, but on a mobile phone or handheld the problem sticks out like a sore thumb and really ruins your enjoyment of the hardware. Nintendo commented that, the problem won't get any worse – that is, your DS won't suddenly start developing dead pixels – and if you do happen to have a unit with the problem, your one-year guarantee will cover the problem

Unfortunately, fixing the problem may not be so easy for importers as Nintendo of America 'are only able to repair products for residents of the US and Canada'. You could try to return the unit to the retailer you bought it from – but if they can't help you, you may be out of luck.



IN BRIEF



ANIMAL MAGIC

We've run a few shots of *Zookeeper* in the past, but we never imagined just how good it really was. In fact it's so good that we wasted an entire day playing it after it was originally discovered. Vaguely reminiscent of *Tetris Attack*, you have to shift pairs of blocks to match three or more animal icons in horizontal or vertical lines. It's unbelievably addictive and has ended up being on everyone's Japanese launch line up orders. If you want to sample the game for yourself head over to www.dsnews.co.uk/zookeeper.htm to play an online version. Mim currently holds the office record at a whopping 19,850...

THE NEW BLACK

It'll come as no surprise that the new DS colour to be made available is black – although we' imagine Nintendo will name it something more 'catchy' like Onyx, Nightshade or something equally exotic. Apparently Nintendo limited DS to silver for launch so they could maximise production of the units. Whether any more colours will be on their way soon is anyone's guess, but they normally do. We're secretly hoping that a pearl white one, like the limited edition SP, rears its head at some point...



NAMCO RPGS

Namco have not one but two RPGs in the works. Both *Baten Kaitos DS* and another instalment in the hugely popular PlayStation RPG series, *Xenosaga*, are currently in production by Monolith Software – adding to the handheld's growing list of epic role-players.

NGC POCKET

SPECIAL • SPECIAL • SPECIAL





OPEN UP!

A revolution in the palm of your hand…

Cut through the plastic seal guarding the box's flaps, plunge your nose into the inviting cardboard opening and suck in a good, long, lung-filling sniff. Come on – you won't get the chance again – have a good whiff of it. Inhale it *riiight* up the old sniffer till you can feel the tang of plasticy newness tickling the back of your tongue before 'doing the crazy' in the back of your brain. Smell it? That's the honk of pristine handheld heaven, that is. Believe it, because it's finally here.

> **"PLUNGE YOUR NOSE INTO THE CARDBOARD OPENING AND SUCK IN A LUNG-FILLING SNIFF"**

First impressions, then? To be honest, not particularly good. Everyone seems to comment that, build-quality wise, it feels a bit cheap. It's not built using the sexiest plastic we've ever felt (Nintendo have got to keep the cost down so that everyone can afford it though) and it is fairly large. It's certainly not trouser pocket-portable, more coat pocket- or handbag-portable. It's like GBA's slightly ganglier big brother.

But you know what they say, 'every cloud…' and all that. If you were lucky enough to import a US DS, everything you needed to be entertained was already in the box. *Metroid Prime Hunters,* which you'll find reviewed in full over on p.48, comes bundled with the machine, which was a godsend when we picked up our units from Nintendo HQ because it meant we had something to play on the two-hour journey home. Crucially, it lets you test out the wireless features straight away (along with the built-in *PictoChat* messaging service). So long as you have other friends with DSs, that is.

Anyway, a few childishly rude messages over *PictoChat* and a couple of *Metroid* deathmatches later it's safe to say that any disappointment with DS eventually faded as we familiarised ourselves with this quite remarkable piece of hardware…

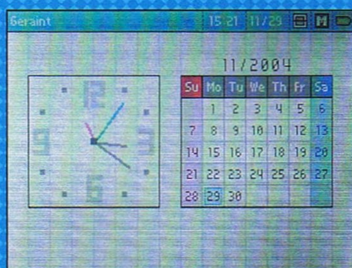
GERAINT EVANS

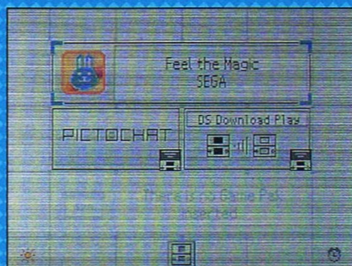

NGC
POCKET



THE HARDWARE

A revolution in the palm of your hand…





SETTING UP

Open up the lid and turn the power on. You'll be greeted by DS's warm welcome chime, while the bottom – touch – screen displays a health and safety warning. You'll see this every time you turn the DS on. Tap the touch screen and you're invited to set the time and date, your nickname, favourite colour and your birthday. From this menu you can also change your personal messages (viewed by others in *PictoChat*), language settings, alarm clock (which will only function if your DS is in sleep mode) and touch screen calibration. Each stab of the stylus is accompanied by a series of chirpy sounds.

On this opening menu you'll also find the option for 'DS Download play'. Hitting this will make your DS scan the area for any downloadable game content (like the *Mario DS* multiplayer). If it finds anything it will automatically download content for you to play. There is one annoying thing about the main menu and set up screens, though, and this applies to *PictoChat* too: quitting out automatically turns off your DS, presumably to save your batteries. It only takes three seconds to get back into action, but still…



THE GAME SLOTS

You have two of these, one for your GBA games at the front and another for DS games at the back. Apart from the touch screen, the DS card loading bay is probably the classiest-feeling bit of the hardware. It's spring-loaded and offers satisfying resistance as you push the cards in. To eject them, gently push the card back inside the device and it slides back out at you. Nice and smooth, like. From the DS's main menu screen you can choose to have the DS boot up straight into any inserted DS game card or, if you prefer, you can opt to choose to load the game manually from the main menu screen.

The GBA slot, while used mainly for GBA games, also has another function in that it's the primary expansion port. Nintendo have a number of DS hardware add-ons in the pipeline, many of which will accessed via the GBA slot. The TV tuner featured in this month's Pocket news (see p.35) is one example of this use. If you ask us, don't be surprised to see some kind of DS camera device slipping into this handy hole in the near future…

BACKWARD COMPATIBILITY



Yup, as we've said, you can play all your existing GBA games on DS. You can't use their multiplayer features with DS, though, which is a shame. From the main menu you can choose which screen you want to display your GBA games on. Whichever you choose, it's fair to say that the games look better on DS's backlit screen than they do on GBA. Colours are more vivid and certainly crisper. They don't take full advantage of the extra screen size, though, with a black border appearing around a smaller GBA-resolution viewing area.

In a rather clever twist, both DS and GBA carts can interact with each other. In Sega's *Feel the Magic XY-XX* for example, inserting the Sega GBA games *Sonic The Hedgehog 3* or *Space Channel 5* unlocks extra costumes for the game's silhouetted lady.

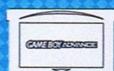


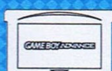
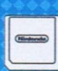
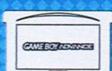
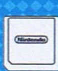
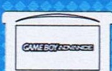
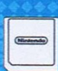
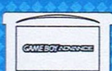


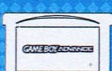
PICTOCHAT

Chances are the first thing you'll want to do is have a crack at *PictoChat*, which is visible from the main menu. There are four chat rooms available for use, each capable of holding up to 16 people. The top screen displays sent messages and the bottom screen allows you to draw on the top half and type via a qwerty-style keyboard. You can clear the drawing area and retrieve any messages from the top screen to edit, as well as use all manner of symbols, punctuation, accents – even Japanese Hiragana and Katakana symbols to get your messages across. Our only major gripe with the program is that there's no visible cursor, which makes typing into strange spaces between your scrawls a trial-and-error process of stabbing at the return and space bar in hope that eventually you're in the right place to type. Other than that, it's an amusing little bonus…








THE HARDWARE...

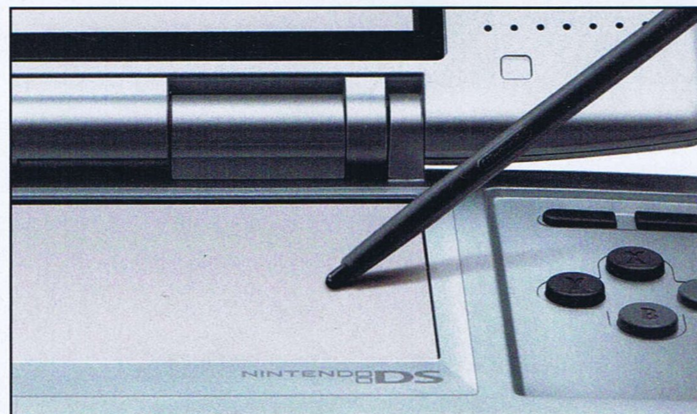
Getting to grips with those intriguing controls.



THE BUTTONS

The buttons don't exude quality, we have to say. The D-pad is bigger than the one on an SP, which we suppose makes it a little more comfortable, but the four-button layout isn't as nice as we'd hoped it would be. In a strange turn of events the buttons themselves are actually smaller than the ones on an SP. This may sound like a silly criticism, but they just don't sit right under the thumb. Granted, they're not too bad for moving and strafing while playing *Metroid Hunters*, but despite DS having the SNES' *Street Fighter*-friendly button configuration (it's got shoulder buttons too, see) we can't exactly see ourselves intuitively throwing out combos on the 11:15 to Paddington. Put it that way.

THE SCREENS



TOP SCREEN

This is the main viewing area, especially for *Mario* and *Metroid*. The screen quality is excellent; we're really quite impressed. You can turn the backlight off via the main menu screen – but what's the point? It's gorgeous. Colours are vivid, the high resolution gives a clean crisp look to edges (there's none of your N64-blurr-o-vision here, thank you very much) and it's perfectly playable in pretty much all lighting conditions. Direct light and reflections can sometimes pose a problem, but it's nothing that can't be handled by simply moving either yourself of the position of the screens.

TOUCH SCREEN

Perhaps DS's biggest draw, the touch screen works like an absolute dream. There's a little bit of 'give' to the plastic, making it feel satisfyingly soft, even when you use the stylus. It's robust too, and even the most frantic stabbing and rubbing doesn't seem to bother the surface one bit, which is a good job seeing as you sometimes have to press fairly hard for the screen to register. Nintendo have announced that they're releasing peelable plastic screen protectors for the DS, something that's comforting to know.

So how well does it work for actual gameplay? Brilliantly. Just one go on the bottom screen with a stylus is enough to convince anyone of DS's charms. It's beautifully intuitive to use and unlike anything you'll have experienced before. *Feel the Magic* and the minigames in *Mario 64 DS*'s 'Rec Room' are the best early examples of touch screen play. Stretching elastic to launch Bob-ombs is as frighteningly satisfying as wheeling a unicycle along a treacherously thin path is strangely unnerving. Everything about it feels so natural, so *right*. Maybe we're not convinced about its use as a complete replacement for an analogue stick, but slowly, but surely, we are getting used to it. And anyway, who's to say it won't be second nature in a couple of months' time? We wouldn't be surprised...



CONTROL



△ **Stylus or thumb shoe? Depends on what you need to do, really...**

There are two main control options on offer. You have the stylus (which slots neatly away in the back of the DS) and the 'thumb shoe'. Thumb shoe? See that picture of the black strap? You attach it to the back of the DS and then wrap it around your thumb. Threaded onto the strap is a little pad of plastic that acts as a plastic shoe under your thumb. (See where we're going with this?) You use the plastic nobble to skate over the surface of the touch screen. Sounds weird, but it works – and is an essential part of playing *Mario 64 DS*, at least in so far as it's better than both the stylus and D-pad for manoeuvring the small rogue one.

The important thing here is for developers to really look at the different control options available – including the microphone – and really work around them and with them. This machine needs games that work with the hardware, not against it. Shoehorning game ideas onto DS and hoping the controls will somehow work simply won't cut it – and *Mario 64*, as nice as it is, is a prime example of how this approach doesn't really work. An uncharacteristic blooper on Nintendo's part, then. *Feel the Magic*, or something like *Wario Ware*, are the opposite of this. They both work so well *because* they were designed to work with the control system, elevating them from normal or conventional games to something altogether unique and special.

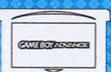


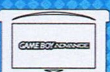
△ **The thumb shoe is definitely the best option when you're playing *Mario*.**

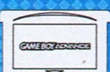













THE HARDWARE...

Plays well with others. Without wires, too...

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY



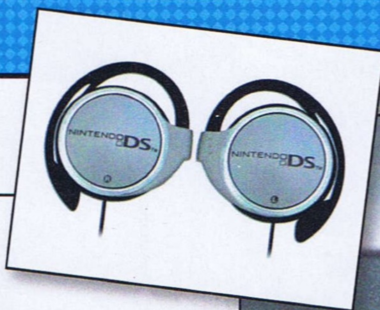
Wireless connectivity is yet another feature that works faultlessly. The manual says you need to be within 30ft of each other with the DSs facing each other for it to work best (preferably without too many walls, people, and interfering hardware like computers nearby), but it seems to work perfectly from double the recommended distance and in an office block full of just about every interfering device you can think of.

We had great fun sending rude messages to the staff on GamesMaster magazine, across a busy, high-tech office. It can sometimes take a little while for the DSs to find each other, but the wait is never more than a minute.

As far as actually playing goes, we couldn't be happier. Linking up is easy and play is fast and smooth. Just like the Wavebird did for Gamecube controllers before it, you'll never accept wires between handhelds ever again. One thing we did notice, though, is that playing wirelessly did seem to drain the batteries a little more quickly – not significantly, but noticeably so. We suppose that's to be expected.

One thing that did take us by surprise was the seeming disappearance of one of Nintendo's promised features, namely "In Sleep mode, players can stop and resume game play whenever they like. If the user receives a message from a friend or user nearby, DS activates itself from Standby mode". Thing is, we've found 'sleep mode' – you just close the lid for that – but we're damned if we can get the thing to wake up after being sent a message. We're hoping that this is a software issue and that the line-up doesn't support this feature yet. We'll let you know when we find out more...

SOUND



The two speakers either side of the screen make a massive difference compared to SP's little centrally mounted one. At full volume DS is pretty loud, with plenty of clarity at high- to mid-range – more than enough to irritate anyone sitting next to you on the bus, at any rate.

Slip on some headphones, though, and it's a whole kettle of much more enjoyable fish. With these hooked up, DS does a nifty approximation of surround sound – fading sounds in and out from left to right and back to front. With a decent set of headphones on you can genuinely tell the position of things from the sounds they make. Even better is the fact that you don't have to buy a stupid adaptor to use them either as the DS has a standard 3.5 jack.

△ Plug your headphones in here – no adaptor required.







△ It looks small, but there's plenty of functionality in the tiny mic.

MICROPHONE

Only one of the US launch games uses this. It's that tiny little hole you see in the front of your DS (with the word Mic next to it). It's pretty sensitive too – sensitive enough to be able to gauge how hard you're blowing (even subtle breath can be picked up by the mic if you've got your kisser right up against it). The other small hole (the one next to the headphone socket) is, as we predicted, meant to be used for a microphone headset. Quite what uses Nintendo has in store for this is anyone's guess, but we wouldn't be surprised if voice messaging came up at some point. Also, games like *Jam with the Band* allow you to record your voice for use in the game's tunes.

SIDE BY SIDE









Just to give you an idea of the physical size of the machine, we've taken some comparison pics for you. The game cards themselves are tiny – not sim card small but still very slim. Significantly dinkier than an After Eight mint, anyway, and we can envisage plenty of lost card situations over time. The exposed contacts on the cards themselves is a little worrying, too, so don't expect to salvage them if you drop them in your tea or something. Our fave picture here has to be the N64 Mario cart against the new, slimline DS Card. If you'd told us eight years ago that we'd be playing *Mario 64* off a cartridge small enough to fit under your tongue we'd have laughed you out of the office. That's progress for you.



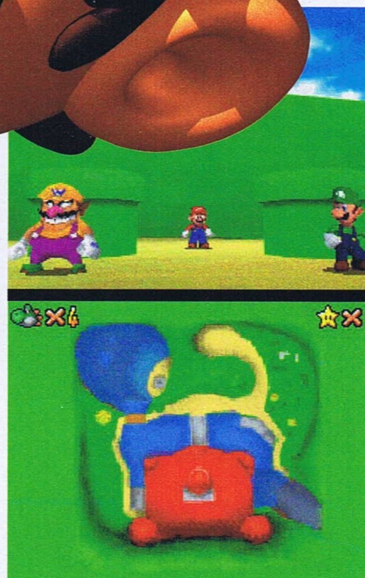
N·GC POCKET

REVIEWS ▪ REVIEWS ▪ REVIEWS ▪ REVIEWS





△ Four players can fight in four bonus areas.



△ The map is just there to fill the screen.



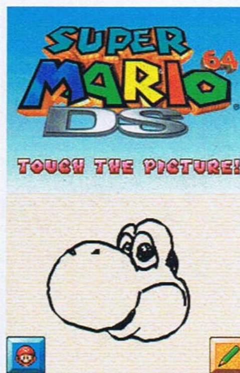
△ Pixellated and unlit, but it still looks nice.

BONUS GAMES

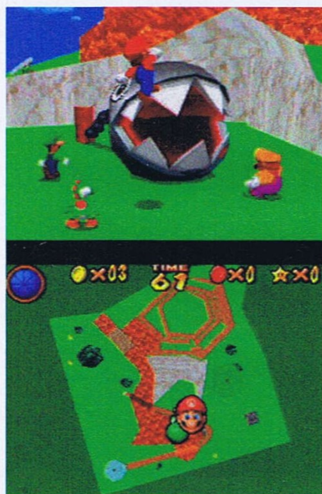
There are a few touch screen bonus game, which you unlock by using each character to find rabbits dotted around the castle. While these aren't as good as the bonus games in Mawaru: Made In Wario, they hint at what can be done with the touch screen. Best of all is the little drawing program that replaces the N64's rubber Mario face on the title screen, and converts your sketch into wobbly string so you can stretch and distort the results.

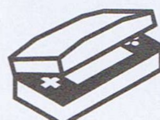






SUPER MARIO 64 DS





FROM: NINTENDO **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **SINGLE CART LINK:** YES
MICROPHONE: NO **OUT:** NOW (US AND JAP) **COST:** £30 (IMPORT)

It's-a him, Mario! But the touch screen does few favours to the best game on DS.

Hands up, everyone who hasn't played this. There must be a few people out there who haven't experienced Mario's finest moment on its native N64 format, and if you're one of them, you'll love this. There's even more to do than there was before, with an extra 30 stars, new levels and new characters.

That we have any reservation at all is entirely due to the control system. *Mario 64* was less designed with the N64's three-pronged controller in mind than the controller was created specifically for the game. It wouldn't work the same with an Xbox or PS2 pad, and it's no surprise to find it doesn't work all that well with a touch screen.

Precise movements are very hard. You have to keep lifting your thumb and recentering it on the screen to get Mario to run at full speed. You can't do the useful side-flip move very easily. You'll never get Mario moving as fluidly as you could with an N64 pad, and the game suffers because of it. The option for D-pad control is a backwards step barely worth considering.

But despite this, *Super Mario 64 DS* is more than playable. It holds its own against more recent games, even with the control problems, and the new stuff is well worth seeing.

Chief among the new additions is the inclusion of Yoshi, Luigi and Wario. The latter two replace the old metal cap and vanish cap – you have to play as them to collect certain stars. Where these caps used to be, Mario finds a special flower that blows him up like a balloon and lets him float over the difficult bits. Whatever they've done to the control system, and the associated dumbing down of certain objectives (specifically the flower and the star-revealing map), the quality of the level design still shines. They're the best playgrounds in any game ever, offering limitless ways to get to a goal, explore secrets, or simply have fun. The game dates back to 1996, but no platformer since has come close. It's a work of genius.

> **"MARIO FINDS A FLOWER THAT BLOWS HIM UP LIKE A BALLOON"**

Which is reason enough to buy it. It's the cartridge that has done about ten times as much service in our DS as every other US launch title combined, and if you never played it all those years ago, you might not be disappointed by the controls. If only the machine's best game actually showed off the possibilities of the touch screen rather than highlighting its lack of an analogue stick.

MARTIN KITTS



DUAL ★★☆☆☆
TOUCH ★★☆☆☆
4

BAD LAKITU

Camera problems? Blame the gimp in the cloud.

In the N64 game, this was Lakitu's moment of glory. The trusty cameraman was controlled by the four C-buttons, and he stayed exactly where you put him. This enabled side-on views of difficult jumps, like a 2D Mario game, which was much easier than viewing the action from behind. On the DS, Lakitu is much less obedient, always floating around to settle for a view of Mario's back.











ASPHALT URBAN GT



FROM: UBI SOFT **MICROPHONE:** NO **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **OUT:** NOW (US) **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30 (IMPORT)



While *The Urbz* and *Spider-Man* don't exactly light up the US launch line-up, they at least show some modicum of competence – unlike this. *Asphalt Urban GT* really is quite, *quite* tragic. While it's a perfectly playable racer in many ways – the frame rate is smooth and there's a decent sense of speed and challenge – it reeks of a game rushed out to make the launch date. To begin with, the pop-up is glaringly obvious, the handling feels stiff and unsatisfying and the crash routines feel horribly unconnected to the way you're driving and prove wholly inconsistent, stopping you dead when you brush past a vehicle one time and launching you into a nastily scripted 360° spin the next.

It just doesn't feel right at all. The AI of the opposing race cars is laughable (they often get flummoxed by simple things like passing other vehicles), as is the behaviour of the rest of traffic, with vehicles seemingly stranded in the middle of the road.

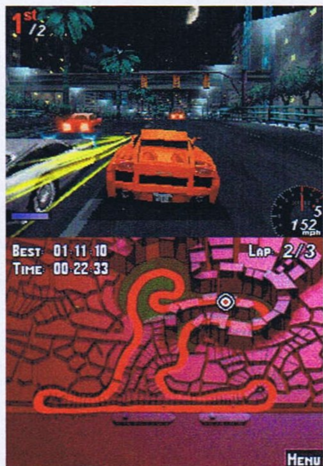
And it gets worse. The turbo boost system, for instance, is awful, requiring you to take your finger off the accelerator and re-apply it. The trouble is, if you just want to lose some momentum and then accelerate, you know, to *slow the car down*, more often than not your vehicle will accelerate to twice the speed as the game thinks you want to boost. Yeah, *really* nice, that.

And it gets worse. The replay function, for some strange reason, removes all the other cars from the track. Any collisions you made with other vehicles are still in the replay, so you watch in stupefied awe as the replay shows you smashing into invisible traffic and stopping dead. Lord have mercy.

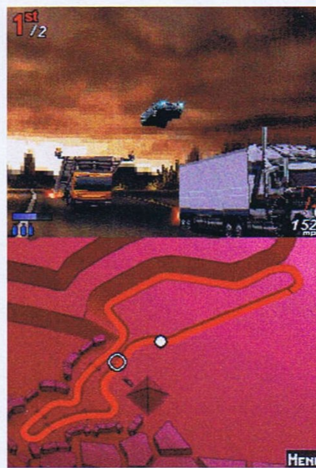
If there's one game you'd do well to avoid come launch day, this has to be it. Given the current opposition, Namco's forthcoming *Ridge Racer* will be best DS driving game for quite some time to come.

GERAINT EVANS

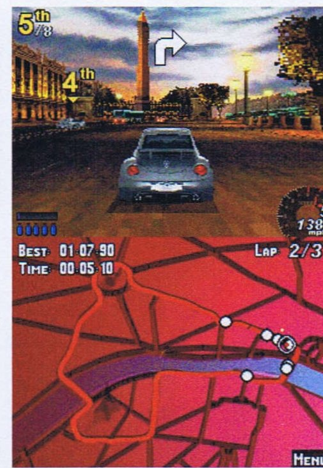
DUAL ★☆☆☆☆
TOUCH ★☆☆☆☆
1



△ This is actually an N-Gage game…

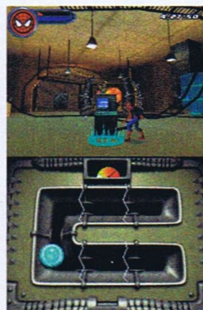


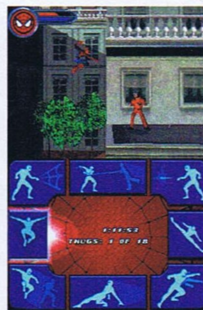
△ …and it kind of shows, with ugly…



△ …and unfinished looking visuals.







SPIDER-MAN 2



FROM: ACTIVISION **MICROPHONE:** NO **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW (US) **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30 (IMPORT)



It certainly looks the part, we'll give it that. *Spider-Man 2's* smooth, it's crisp, and it certainly couldn't have been pulled off on GBA, so in that respect it does go some way to using some of the grunt under DS's bonnet. But looks, as our mothers always tell us, aren't everything…

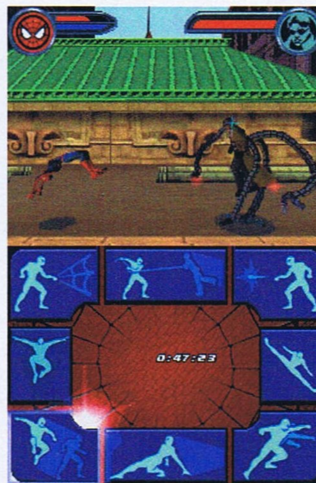
The 3D environments and beautifully animated polygonal characters impress to a point, the way the game runs at a constantly slick frame rate as Spidey swings past the detailed environments is pleasing, and the way the camera tracks him on his 2D plane of movement around corridors and buildings and so on is striking for the first half an hour or so of play. And after that initial 30 minutes it all goes a bit downhill.

For all its 3D pretensions, this is still a very basic side-scrolling platforming affair. It has nothing particularly new to offer anyone and doesn't really do anything spectacular to showcase the unique features of DS. The touch screen, for example, is primarily used to switch between Spider-Man's various abilities, and this changes during key events like boss battles, where you tap the screen to defend Spidey against incoming attacks. Aside from this and some other mini-events like flipping switches, it's all pretty uninspiring stuff. The microphone doesn't get used at all, and the wireless networking doesn't get made use of.

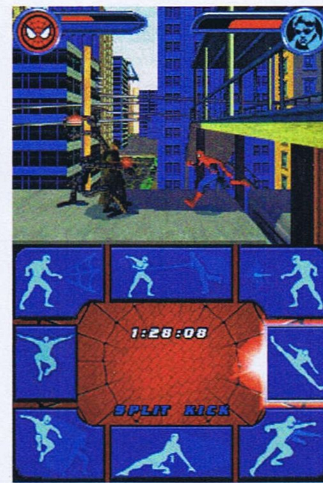
What you're left with is a fairly enjoyable action platformer marred by some silly flaws, like woefully unfocused level design (which is all the more frustrating when you consider just how big some of the locations are) and combat that's as repetitive as it is depressingly unambitious. Don't get us wrong, though, this isn't a terrible game – and it's certainly nowhere near as bad as the recent *Spider-Man 2* on GBA – but in the grand scheme of things it's pretty forgettable stuff and will (deservedly) be forgotten once the better DS-focused games start rolling out.

GERAINT EVANS

DUAL ★★☆☆☆
TOUCH ★★☆☆☆
3



△ Use the touch screen to choose…



△ …between Spidey's attacks.

THE URBZ



FROM: EA
MICROPHONE: NO
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW (US)
SINGLE CART LINK: NO
COST: £30 (IMPORT)

We can't say that this is a *crushing* disappointment, because we weren't expecting great things from it in the first place, but to see a near-identical game to the mono-screened version you'll find reviewed a couple of pages over is a disgrace. Honestly, bar a few touch-screen orientated changes, this is an identical game to the one you'll find on GBA. If you want to know what the game is all about, we suggest you read the other review and then come back…

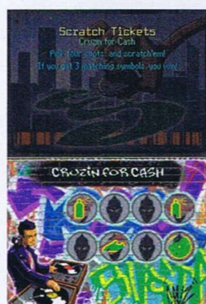
Okay, so the differences between this and the GBA version, then. To start off with, visually, it's slightly better – but only slightly. The resolution is a little higher and DS's superior backlit screen helps to make things feel a little sharper. Next, the menu screens that you access in the GBA version by hitting Start or Select have now been shifted to DS's bottom screen – hardly groundbreaking but, practically speaking, it does make things flow a little smoother, allowing you to multi-task while, for example, you wait for your Sim to finish taking a shower, cook his dinner or sleep or complete whatever other tedious task he's in the middle of.



Δ Visually, it's not a huge departure from the GBA version. Disappointing.



Δ This touch-screen minigame is one of too few uses for the bottom screen.







Aside from these menu changes, the only other major difference is that some of the minigames you encounter further into the game also use the touch screen. It's blatantly obvious that these are additions that have been hurriedly bolted onto the existing game's framework. It's a pretty poor show, to say the least. DS is a powerful piece of kit, with some many unique features, it's almost insulting to see a game like *The Urbz* use them so begrudgingly.

So the question then, is which one (should you be so desperate to buy an Urbz game) do we recommend you go for? Well, given that the games are so similar, and the SP is significantly smaller and cheaper machine, we suggest you go for the GBA version…

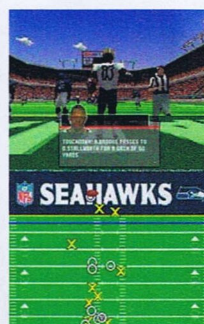


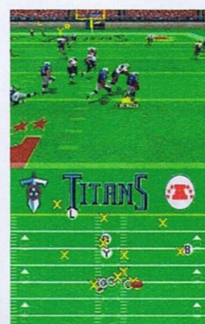
MADDEN NFL 2005



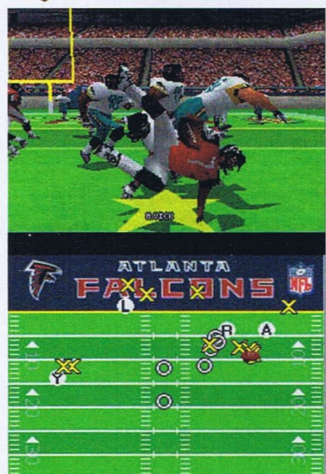
FROM: EA
MICROPHONE: NO
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW (US)
SINGLE CART LINK: NO
COST: £30 (IMPORT)







Δ The map and touch-screen play section points the way forward for Madden.



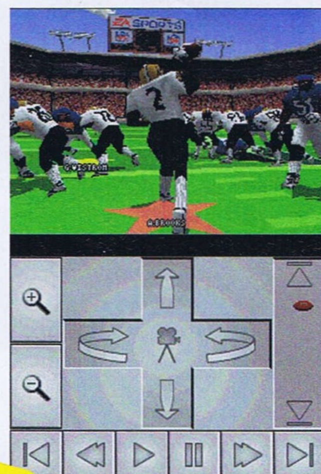
Δ It plays a decent enough game but could do so much more on DS.

Unfortunately, this is yet another title that feels rushed. There's a distinctly 'bare-bones' feel to it all, especially in terms of the game's presentation and DS-specific features. The faceless character models, looking like mechanised gorillas in spandex, shuffle around the field like identikit drones. The menu system and in-game play selection screens look like they were banged out in an hour's lunch break, and the sound throughout is minimal and, well, barely satisfactory given the power of the hardware.

It's a shame, because underneath it all is a fairly solid game of American football – albeit a stripped-down one compared to its bigger console counterparts – with the only major gameplay gripe being that it can get a little difficult to see when the camera is panning out on the action.

On the whole, this is decent enough to satisfy the small number of gridiron fans among importers, but it's not exactly a recommended purchase. It's perhaps best seen as glimpse of what could be done on DS later on. The touch screen showing a bird's-eye view, for example, is a smart addition that could be used to better tactical advantage in later Madden games. And the chunky play selection buttons are easy to navigate and intuitive to use. A fair effort, then, but still a long way from being accomplished enough to convince anyone but fans of the sport…




Δ Touch-controlled replays are probably the best use of the hardware.









METROID PRIME HUNTERS: FIRST HUNT



△ Four people can play wirelessly.



FROM: NINTENDO **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO
MICROPHONE: NO **OUT:** NOW (US) **COST:** FREE (IMPORT)

One of the best demonstrations of the power of DS - a fully-3D-wireless-deathmatching freebie!

Okay, this isn't exactly a full game but you still get a *First Hunt* demo free in your DS box (if you imported from the US), so we reckon it deserves an appraisal.

The game has two modes: there's a Training game and a multiplayer mode. The latter is perhaps the one you'll get the most enjoyment out of, allowing up to four DSs to go head-to-head in a three different arenas. It's surprisingly accomplished for a handheld. The visuals are crisp – if perhaps a little blocky – and, crucially, it runs at a perfectly smooth frame rate throughout.

Our original control worries have been quashed too. The game allows you to switch between using the D-pad and the buttons to move, strafe and look. You're also able to use the touch screen as an analogue control method that works similarly to a mouse and keyboard. The game even supports both left and right-handed control for each configuration, dispelling our fear that "left-handed players would be screwed", voiced a couple of issues back. The only major problem we have with the controls is the worrying lack of an 'invert look' option, which could prove annoying to a great many people, but it's nothing that you can't get used to after a few minutes' practice.

Despite only having three different arenas to fight in, there's plenty of enjoyment on offer here as long as you have three friends to fight against. There's only one arena that'll confidently support just two players, while the third arena is quite large and not at all suited to any less then four. On the whole, though, this is solid stuff, and given that it's free there's nothing to complain about.

The Training mode in the demo isn't too shabby either. There's a time trial that sees you exterminating bugs through a mini-level before facing off against a green Samus-like boss, a Survival section where you just keep shooting at metroids until you eventually die and a Morph ball section that lets you race around a circuit collecting orbs against the clock. Training is probably the weaker of the two modes, but there's some enjoyment to be had in trying to improve your scores for each section.

All in all it's not a bad little giveaway. It's a fine showcase for demonstrating what the hardware is capable off, it allows wireless multiplayer games from the word go and will undoubtedly whet your appetite for when the 'proper' version eventually emerges soon…

> "YOU JUST KEEP SHOOTING AT METROIDS UNTIL YOU DIE"

GERAINT EVANS

DUAL ★★★
TOUCH ★★★★
4

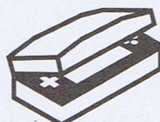


△ Expect more in the final game.

FEEL THE MAGIC XY/XX



△ Match numbers to open the 'chutes.



FROM: SEGA
MICROPHONE: YES
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW (US)
SINGLE CART LINK: NO
COST: £30 (IMPORT)

It's the classic tale of boy-meets-girl-meets-Wario Ware in Sonic Team's innovative love story…

To be honest, apart from *Mario 64 DS* this is the only US launch title you should seriously consider importing, and out of all the launch games it's the only one which is *truly* dependant on the DS hardware, using the touch screen, dual screens and microphone to great effect.

The game revolves around a clumsy hero trying to win the affection of a girl. In order to impress her, he teams up with a bunch of performance artists called the 'Rub Rabbits' and participates in a number of insane stunts to get himself noticed. *Feel the Magic* is broken up into a number of scenes, preceded by some animated and still comic-style panels that explain a little of the story. Each scene holds one, two or three minigames that you have to beat in order to fill up a heart meter. Once the heart fills to 100% you can move on to the next scene.

The minigames vary wildly and involve some quite bizarre scenarios, from guiding the game's hero through the intestines of a giant snake and catapulting pedestrians at an escaping vehicle to regurgitating goldfish from your stomach. The vast majority of them require you to use the touch screen in various ways, such as using your steady hand to guide a unicycle down a narrow pathway, rubbing the screen to help people escape from quicksand or using the stylus to paint shapes on the wall. Sonic Team have really used their imagination to demonstrate the huge number of ways in which the touch screen can be used. Stabbing, rubbing, drawing – whatever, the result is always pleasing and refreshing to play. It's not just the touch screen that gets taken advantage of, either. The microphone is used in a number of smart ways, from simply shouting into it to get the girl's attention to blowing into it to power a sailboat or extinguish candles. The microphone is even sensitive enough to tell just how hard you're blowing.

"IT'S THE SORT OF EXPERIENCE THAT ONLY DS CAN PROVIDE"

It's a unique game, and the sort of experience that only DS can provide, so top marks to Sega for their efforts on that front. Unfortunately, a couple of things let the side down. First, the balance of the minigames is a tad irritating. Many of them go on for just a touch too long and for the harder games this can be frustrating. Second, the game itself is a bit short, something that's made worse by Sonic Team (rather cheaply) repeating some of the longer 'boss' games.

Still, there's no doubting that the game is both remarkable and enjoyable, and it will doubtless earn itself plenty of fans. It's stylish, inventive and, perhaps most importantly, won't fail to put a beaming smile on your face.

GERAINT EVANS

DUAL ★★★★
TOUCH ★★★★★
4



△ You get stranded on an island with your dream girl.



△ Keep her warm by fanning the flames of the fire.







△ Don't know if it's just us but we'd have loved to have seen a bit more grey in this scene. Maybe a touch of brown?



LORD OF THE RINGS THE THIRD AGE



FROM: EA
SAVE: ON CART
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
SINGLE CART LINK: NO
COST: £30



EA do GBA strategy with predictable results…



Think *Fire Emblem* and you've got the gist of this strategy game. You have a set number of units to a party, which you manoeuvre around a battlefield seen from a bird's eye view. Once units are in attacking range, the perspective changes to a side-on view and you watch your unit whittle away a target unit's health.

First impressions are poor, if only because everything is so muddy. Greys, browns and blacks dominate and, at a glance, it's not easy to see which unit is which. We appreciate that it's trying to be faithful to Middle Earth, but some clarity could have been injected with a better colour palette. Things improve when you're battling in brighter territories, but even then it's difficult to get a feel for the bigger picture of a battle.

The result is a game that lacks the charisma and energy of one like *Fire Emblem*. We didn't really care about the units under our command. They're just faceless knights assisted by companion heroes, none of whom inspire any will to complete the game. It's bland – even the basic battle strategy seems watered down. The 'scissors, paper, stone' dynamics of superior games doesn't seem as strong, and you rarely get a rewarding sense of why you won a battle or why you lost.

That's not to say the strategy isn't there. If you look hard enough and scour the in-game glossary, there are plenty of point advantages and specific unit strengths to help plan out courses of action, but in light of the poor presentation, it's hard to see why anyone other than Rings fans and strategy veterans will be patient enough to bother. If you can stick with it, though, there's a fair amount of satisfaction to be had.

> **"GREYS, BROWNS AND BLACKS DOMINATE AND IT'S NOT EASY TO SEE WHICH UNIT IS WHICH"**

GERAINT EVANS









TY 2: BUSH RESCUE



FROM: EA **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

Up against *Shark Tale* and *Shrek 2* (see p.52), this feels like an accomplished platformer. It *is* pretty accomplished. The controls are tight, the levels are easy on the eye, movement is nice and fast and Ty has a range of abilities, like jumping and hovering, biting and boomerang-wanging, to help him along his merry way.

Much like Ty's home-console cousins, then, this is average platforming at its most inoffensive. It doesn't do anything wrong, it's cheerful enough and can, on occasion, be challenging. But that's not your cue to rush out and buy it.

Consider this in the same league as you would, say, Crash Bandicoot or Spyro – while it's entertaining in its own right, it rarely delivers a truly engaging experience. The enemies get repetitive and the power-ups are unremarkable and do little to really change the overall experience. In fact there's nothing particularly new in here to spur you on.

On a console that already has its fair share of top-grade platformers, there isn't much of an incentive to give it a second thought. Unless of course you've exhausted GBA's platformers – which is unlikely when there are so many.

GERAINT EVANS





△ Plenty of 'rangs and the ability to drive robots – he's a multi-talented tiger.





THE URBZ



FROM: EA **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

Compared to its bigger console brother, it's fair to say this isn't as utterly hateful. Maybe it's the fact that we didn't have to put up with the cringeworthy animations. Maybe it's that fact that the game revolves less around dressing up like a fool, less about blowing 'air-kisses' to people you'd rather shoot and less about blinging your way to the top. Maybe it's the fact that a vacuous experience like this is better suited to something small you can slip in your pocket.

Whatever the reason, there's just something about the GBA version of *The Urbz* that makes us feel a little more comfortable playing it. To start with, the game seems better focused, with a shopping list of objectives to follow, errands to run and, perhaps more importantly, some semblance of a plot, helping to give the impression that there's some kind of purpose behind it all. Unlike the GC version, there's also more flexibility in the way of 'Sims meters'. You need to maintain your hygiene, comfort, fun, hunger, bladder and social meters, but they aren't so intrusive that they hamper your progress through the more interesting task of fulfilling your objectives and opening up more of the game.

The only thing we didn't like was the repetitive and shallow nature of the social side of the game, but on the whole this is a fairly decent effort for a handheld *Sims*.

GERAINT EVANS



△ You need to constantly monitor your Sim's readouts to make sure he stays happy – playing this videogame next door to your house will keep him amused.









SHREK 2
BEG FOR MERCY



FROM: ACTIVISION **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

If this had turned out to be anything *other* than complete rubbish we would have been genuinely surprised. But there are no major shocks here. This is a very basic and humdrum 2D side-scroller that sees you guiding Puss in Boots, Shrek and their motley band of fairytale freaks across a series of short levels, collecting coins and dispatching idiotic enemies with a series of repetitive stabs on the attack button.

There really is nothing on offer here that's particularly noteworthy. It *is* worth pointing out, however, that we downloaded a revamped version of *Chuckie Egg* for free that proved far more fun than this. Maybe developers Vicarious Visions, should have had a look at that (and some other freeware) before they decided this kind of tosh was acceptable entertainment.

Anyway, the point of all that was to highlight the words 'Free' and 'Entertaining' – hopefully that'll give you some indication as to whether or not to part hard cash for this ugly little stain of a game.

GERAINT EVANS









△ As bland as it is, this racing bit…



△ …is about as exciting as things get.

SHARK TALE



FROM: ACTIVISION **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

Vicarious Visions are on a roll. From the opening few minutes of this we could detect the rank whiff of *Shrek 2* – the front end is spookily similar, and the game isn't very different (or any better) either. You move around the levels, collect tokens, fight stupid enemies and, at the end of some levels, you participate in minigames such as a rhythm-action oddity that has you cleaning a whale's mouth completely out of time with the music. And after that it's back to the same old rubbish. Move a bit. Punch and kick a bit (yes – this fish knows kung fu!) Move a bit more. Die of boredom.

Seriously, it amazes us how anyone can make a game so tedious. There's no skill required, no sense of reward, there's nothing very good about *any* of it. You just go through the process of playing it. Like you go through the process of washing the dishes.

GERAINT EVANS





TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2
BATTLE NEXUS

FROM: ACTIVISION **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



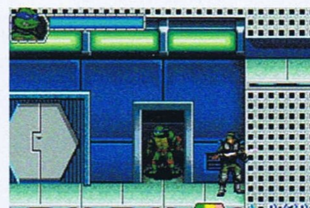
One thing's for certain – this won't be anything like you would have imagined. It's not a straight up, button-mashing, point-to-point whack-a-thon. It's a lot more, er… peculiar than that. The game is divided into three modes, Story, Race and Battle. The first is bizarre; it's a 2D side-on affair where you collect crystals, hide in dark corners, creep up pipes and look for keys to unlock doors – oh, and beat the browns out of enemies from time to time. Race is an even more peculiar *Uni-Rally*-style racer that takes place on a single plane and feels, oddly, a bit like *Sonic the Hedgehog*, while Battle lets you pummel enemies to death in increasingly difficult bouts.

It's not really any good, which shouldn't surprise you one bit. There's just nothing immediate about it. At all. It's as though Konami had a bunch of game ideas entirely unconnected to the Turtles and then just decided to foist the shelly ones into the game last minute. It's all, very, very strange…

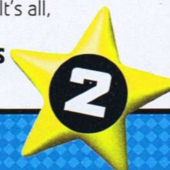
GERAINT EVANS



△ There are three modes on offer – one's this weird hover-board racing game. It disturbed Marcus so much he didn't speak for two days.







MS PAC-MAN MAZE MADNESS



FROM: ZOO DIGITAL **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



You know what? We actually like this. Not that it's particularly good, but for some inexplicable reason it makes us smile. Which is a good start.

It's a pretty basic game. There are the usual Pac-Man trappings with pellets that you have to be collect and power pills that give you the ability to chomp back at pursuing enemies. Along the way you have to navigate basic 3D-ish levels, hopping over bumpers, pushing crates and TNT to clear the way forward and… well, that's basically it. Like we said, it's not actually very good but it has a palatable cheekiness that, at the very least, doesn't make us hate it. The sound effects and music are happy, bouncy and brash and, despite the fact that it's ultimately pretty tedious, it's all quite solidly designed and at least mildly diverting. Not totally awful then – but you're hardly missing out if you never happen to come across it.

GERAINT EVANS

2



△ **Ah, some classic Pac-action.**

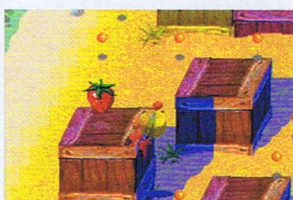


△ **Some not-so-classic TNT pushing.**

PAC-MAN WORLD



FROM: ZOO DIGITAL **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30


△ **It's simple platforming fun…**


△ **…and too easy for our tastes.**



Another Pac-Man game – and another one that's managed to put a smile on our face. This one's slightly different, though. There are still pellets and Pac-stuff, but this is more of an out and out platformer. Pac-Man can climb up ledges, has a variety of different jumping moves and can 'rev himself up' for a rolling attack or to launch himself over ramps. Presentation-wise it's not too shabby; everything is bright, clear, colourful and cheerful enough. The music, however, is a touch on the distorted side.

Still, there's no hiding the fact that there's nothing new on offer. All the platforming challenges you face, you'll have seen a thousand times over. It's not exactly difficult either (although finding all the collectables could prove fairly taxing we suppose), and experienced gamers will see it off inside a day. Which would only make this a good purchase if it was for someone *only just* old enough to pick up a GBA.

GERAINT EVANS

2





△ **It's so slow and so ponderous that the thrill of 'real' wrestling isn't captured. Still, at least the crowd don't seem to mind – look at all those angry fists.**

WWE: SURVIVOR SERIES



FROM: THQ **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



Admittedly, the last time we reviewed this we weren't supposed to. It was preview code and, as a result, was unfinished. However, we'd be lying if we told you that the time between reviews had been used to improve things. It hasn't – and our original misgivings about the game remain.

The main problem is that it's just so painfully sluggish. The time it takes from button press to the desired action feels like an age. There's no immediacy here at all and consequently, it's frustrating, unsatisfying and very rarely (if at all) gets your pulse racing. In any way. Visually too, it's all very bland. There's nothing particularly flamboyant about it – something that's essential (*surely*) for a wrestling game.

True, this is a grappler and so should be a slower, more ponderous affair, but by Peach's pasties, surely they could have made it just a little more exciting. You never feel as though your hits are doing damage. Every battle always feels too similar to the previous one, and even the multiplayer can't offer much in the way of thrills.

Suffice to say, then, we still don't like *Survivor Series* very much. Yes, this is still the most comprehensive wrestling game you can get for the small screen, but that's not really saying much and while devotees may find some entertainment in here, be warned that – as we stated last time – the game does nothing to capture the spectacle of the real thing. In this respect, it's something of a failure.

GERAINT EVANS

2









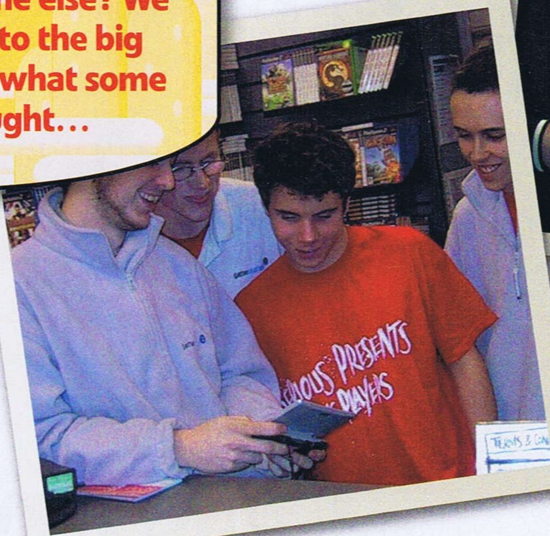
△ **There are plenty of moves on offer.**



△ **But the moves never feel satisfying.**

WORD ON THE STREET...

We've got it and we love it – but what about everyone else? We took the DS out into the big freezing city to see what some strangers thought...



Andrew Kerr
Age 17

You know what this is?
It's a DS.
Planning on buying one?
Yeah, probably... [plays *Mario 64*]
What do you think of the controls?
It's quite tricky to get used to actually. There's no reason why I won't get used to it after a while, though – it plays okay.
What do you think of the design?
I like it, it looks smart and it's a decent enough size, I suppose.

Brendan Evry — Age 15
Laurence Thomas — Age 15
Rick Wilson — Age 16

Hello there. Do you know what this is?
LT: Yeah, it's a Nintendo DS.
You planning on getting one?
BE: Yes, definitely.
LT: Maybe.
RW: I'll probably get one when it comes out over here... This [*Feel the Magic*] is mad.
Any games in mind?
RW: This [*Feel the Magic*] one!... I love using this stick instead of the buttons... It's amazing.
LT: I'll probably go for *Mario 64*...
What do you think of the design?
LT: I like the two screens. It looks a bit bare around the top screen with all that flat silver – and it's a bit big maybe, but it doesn't really matter...
RW: [still playing *Feel the Magic*]... Hehehe... He heh... HEHEH!... this is amazing...



Patrick Bergstroem
Age 18

Do you know what this is?
Er... Is it a Nintendo DS?
Do you want to try one?
Yes please. I've been looking at importing one – but I'd rather wait until it comes down in price. At £200 it's a bit expensive for me right now.
You should be able to find one on sale for closer to £130...
Really? I'll probably buy one eventually then. I'd rather wait for something like *Mario Kart* to come out on it first though. Wireless multiplayer on that would be great...



Gideon Potter
Age 26

Do you know what this is?
It's a DS.
You getting one?
I'd imagine so.
Any games in mind?
It's got to be *Wario Ware* first and then, maybe *Mario 64*...
How are you finding the controls for that [Mario 64]?
It's okay, I've been using the D-pad and it holds up fairly well – not too bad.
What do you make of the design of the unit.
It's nice – much better than the earlier one Nintendo showed. It's got a nice weight to it, and the button layout is all right. The dual screen and touch screen thing's great – I just hope developers actually embrace them. Hopefully games like this [*Feel the Magic*] will get people who don't normally like games interested too...



Kelvin Harnden
Age 20

Do you know what this is?
Yeah, it's a Nintendo DS – I played one my mate had imported yesterday.
You getting one?
Yes, definitely.
What do you think of the design?
It's not bad, quite nice really. I like it.
Got your eye on any games?
Mario and *Wario Ware* probably...

OUR PROMISE Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

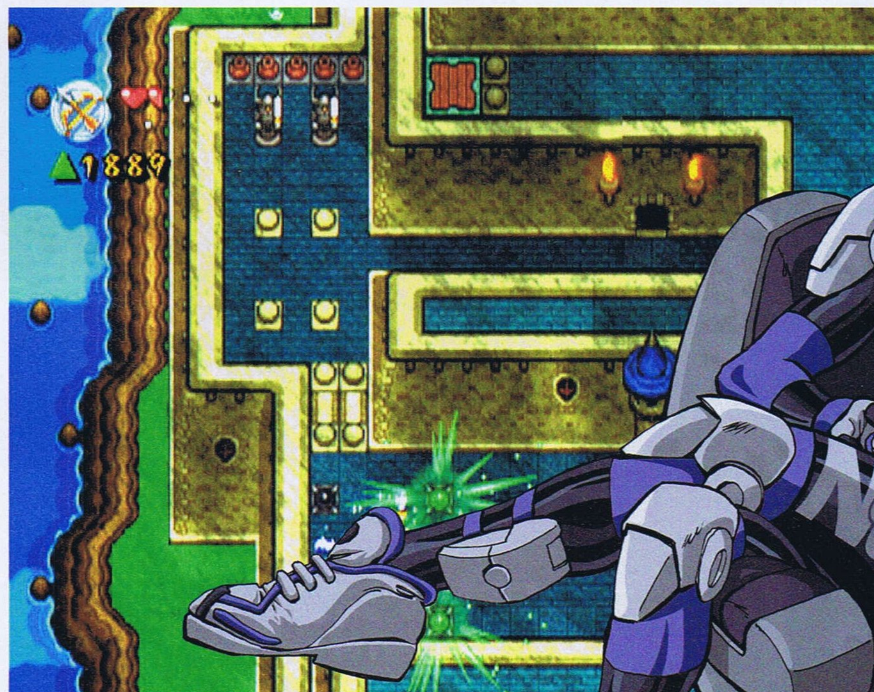
NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS











LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS

A smorgasbord of Links in tasty action to get your gaming appetite up. P58

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!



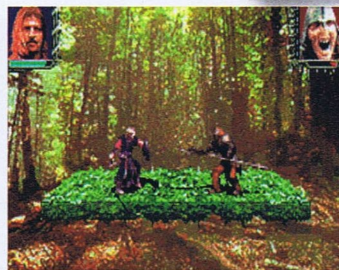
KING ARTHUR

Romano-British butchery with Ray Winstone. P65



SUPER MARIO 64 DS

We've had a lot to say in the past about companies re-hashing classic games… how will this one fare? P44



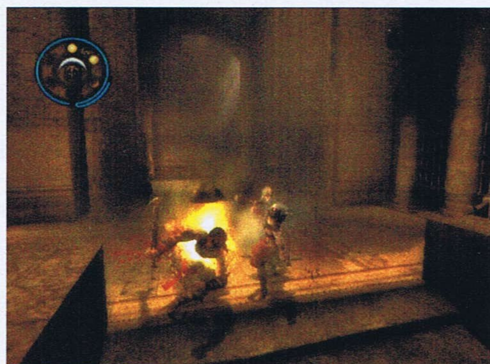
LORD OF THE RINGS THE THIRD AGE

Talk about beating the browns out of an orc – it looks like they've been beaten all over the game. With some tasteful grey for variety… P50

AND...

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN

He's cheated death once – but now his fate's catching up with him, in the shape of the lethal Dahaka. Only time-tweaking and murderising can save him now. P70



CALL OF DUTY FINEST HOUR

Experience different types of World War II warfare as you snipe at Stalingrad, battle in North Africa and even trundle around in a tank. Variety is the spice of… death. P66

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

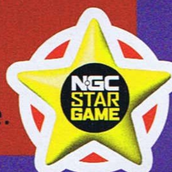
0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this game is crud.

25-49
A disappointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.



THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS
Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some quick plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suitable suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS
Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY
How well does the game make use of the Gamecube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN
Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? This is where you'll find out for sure…

VERDICT
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.



- It's Link.
- Essential to the game – three Links can't form a square.



- He's wearing pink! It's a girl's colour.
- He's useless by himself.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Blue Link
Linktasticom
NGC/102, 99%
The only thing better than Blue Link is the original and best Green one.



1 VISUALS
Pinkydink? He looks like he's wearing Zelda's pyjamas.

9 SOUNDS
Sounds like… well, it just sounds like Link. We like that.

9 MASTERY
Only one man pushes games further – and he's checking pipes.

9 LIFESPAN
Has to live as long as the rest. No-one'd pick him, otherwise.

VERDICT
Pink Link looks camper than Paul's VW van. Apart from that, we quite like the pointy-eared little guy.

NGC 91

MEET THE NGC TEAM

Never travel in time. A fatal case of death will be the result.



MARCUS
Marcus returned with a pair of dinosaurs. "They're endangered," he cried, as Paul unclamped their jaws from his torso…



PAUL
Paul's riffs introduced rock 'n' roll to 1950s LA. Sadly, his new actor pal James Dean then offered to drive him to the beach…



KITTSY
Hanging out with Vlad the Impaler was a barrel of laughs, but being buried alive by resentful peasants ruined everything.



GERAINT
Being underfed and boyish, Geraint's Victorian Christmas ended when he was shoved up a chimney and choked on soot.



MIM
Went to Rome. Unluckily, resembling a woad-covered Briton was not a good look in Caesar's city. One trip to the Circus followed…



DAN
Bucked the trend and went forward in time – to when his grandchildren worked out what he's been doing. We haven't seen him since.







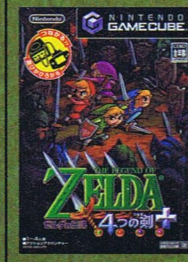


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

Are four Links better than one? They ought to be, for over £400…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
DEVELOPER	NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE	7TH JAN
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





With DS riding high on Nintendo's 'To Do…' list, the once-trumpeted GBA-Gamecube Link has fallen down Nintendo's agenda, destined to languish in obscurity – where most of us reckon it belongs. As a result, the late arrival of *Four Swords* and its heavy hardware requirements (one GBA and link cable each) feels a bit strange, like a reminder of one of Nintendo's more wayward ideas. But that's not to say it should be dismissed easily – far from it. We first reviewed it back in April and we loved it (loved it more than *Crystal Chronicles*, at any rate) and despite the baffling omission of one of our favourite modes in this translated version, we *still* love it. And we suppose you want to know why..?

So let's get that 'omission' out the way first. Called Tetra's Trackers, it was a











SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Ten reasons why we absolutely love Four Swords…



One of the earliest pick ups, and one you'll all be fighting over, the Fire Rod delivers one of the most satisfying effects ever. Aim it at a patch of grass and watch the fire spread, revealing hoards of gems.



Probably better in single-player, the ability to level up your items at fairy pools is wonderful, turning items like the humble catapult into a weapon that spews bullet hell in three different directions.



The old Megaton hammer. Charge her up and let her rip to send shockwaves across the screen. The rippling effect shakes the leaves off the trees and makes buildings jump from their foundations.



Picking up a rock or slashing away a bush – but usually beating a mini-boss or solving a puzzle – will shower the screen with hundreds of gems, sending everyone into a viciously greedy fighting frenzy.



Get your team up to 2,000 gems and your sword will gain the power to repel evil. This sword has two levels of charge; the second sends your posse of Links into a super-spinning fury of destruction.



△ Line up your Links and watch as your charged catapult shots annihilate anything stupid enough to get in their way…





△ Link can't survive under water for long.



△ This fairy will upgrade your weapons.

multiplayer minigame 'hosted' by *Wind Waker's* cheeky pirate-ess. In it, she guided players on the TV map screen to waypoints that you had to navigate to on the GBA. Basically, it was an overblown race-cum-treasure-hunt, and it was absolutely blinding.

Back when we reviewed the Japanese version, for weeks you could hear Tetra wittering commands from the television screen, punctuated with rude words that Kittsy had spelled out in Katakana, interrupted further by colourful expletives yelled by the **NGC** team as we outfoxed each other to reach the goals. It was damn fine entertainment, so much so this was originally planned as a standalone game. It's therefore maddening to find it doesn't exist any more. It leaves a gaping hole behind it and we've decided to drop the original percentage score somewhat…

Still, it's not all bad news, because the game's main mode, Hyrule Adventure, is astonishingly good in its own right. It's viewed from the classic top-down perspective. Visually, it's not exactly life-changing, but it has a visual style that's quite endearing. The levels look almost painted at times, with streaks of subtle pastel shades flecking the landscape. Hovering over the top are shadows of clouds, rolling mist and reflections to give the scene a sense of depth, while Nintendo have ensured there are also plenty of secondary effects to help breathe life into the proceedings. Warping ripples occur at points of impact, leaves get shaken off trees, fire shimmers and heat-haze distorts while water shimmers and casts rainbows as it falls – and these are just the minor effects that you'll be treated to throughout the adventure. Suffice

> **"EACH SUBSECTION ESSENTIALLY PLAYS OUT LIKE A BIG ZELDA DUNGEON"**



GONE WITH THE WIND

One thing you'll notice is the proliferation of Wind Wakery (is that a word? It is now!) effects. Defeated enemies disappear in a puff of swirling smoke, bombs blast with an equally tasty swirl of oranges and reds. In fact, many of the bosses you face will be familiar…


The balance between co-operation and treachery is a fine one. You have to work together to complete puzzles, but later you'll chuck your pals down pits and set them on fire – anything to get at those gems.


As it employs a 2D approach to the visuals, Four Swords can chuck hundreds of enemies at you at once. It's truly satisfying seeing them all reduced to plumes of smoke with one super-charged attack.


Any indoor action (like in caves) is displayed on the GBA. When only one player is indoors, the GBA screen is displayed on the TV for all to see. Expect plenty of jeering from any fellow players watching.


Surprise is always an element in Zelda games. Here you're required to use your Links to push a building around a field. As you do so, roof mounted flame throwers billow out, turning the screen into an inferno.


Many bosses are tailored around the dual-screen feature. Here, players on the TV overworld have to make a giant bird crash into buildings, while the others enter the houses on the GBA to whack the bird's darned head.


△ You'll never tire of watching a fully charged quartet of Links whirling across the screen.

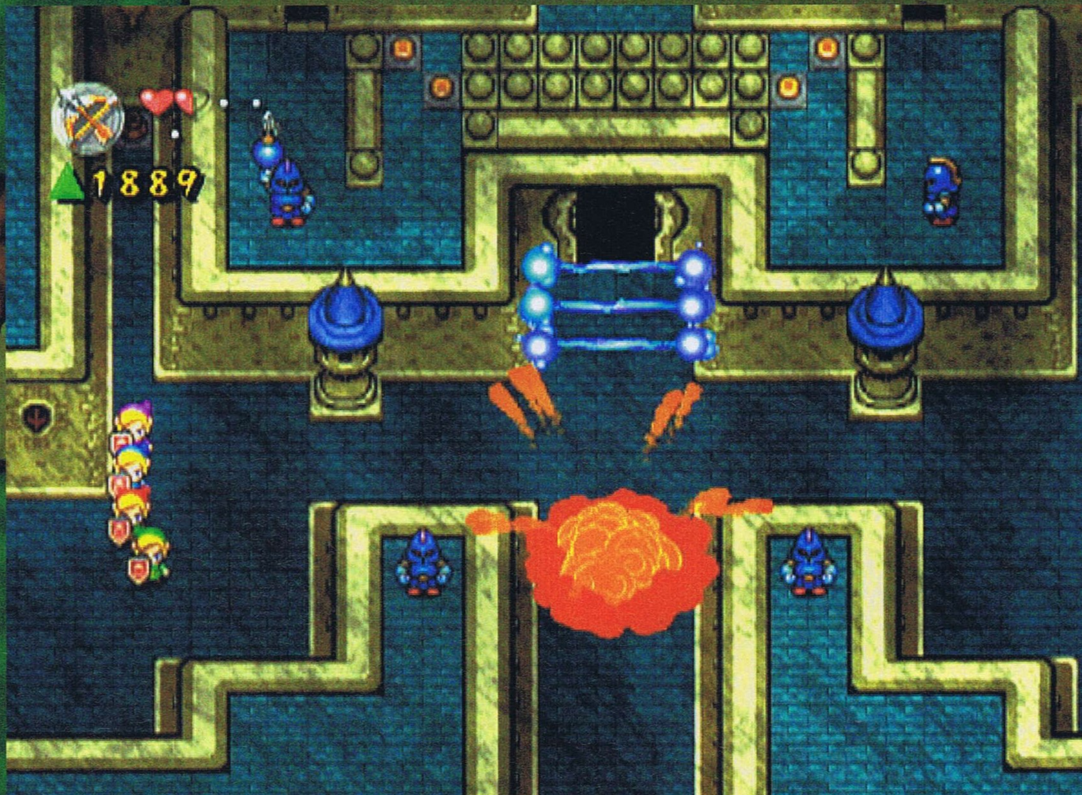
to say, it's not an ugly game and it's unfortunate that these screenshots won't really do the game the justice it deserves.

Hyrule Adventure itself is relatively simple. It's divided into a series of regions in Hyrule, with each area further divided into three subsections and capped off by a boss. Each subsection essentially plays out like a big Zelda dungeon – a series of increasingly brain-teasing puzzles and testing enemy encounters that you have to overcome. There's a catch, though: as the title suggests, the puzzles revolve around manoeuvring, and mastering the use of, four Links at the same time. In a multiplayer game, each Link can be controlled independently via a player armed with a



BATTLE MODE

This isn't as much fun as it should be. Fighting your mates, all 'being' Link and lobbing bombs at each other is a little unexciting. The main problem is that, in comparison to Hyrule Adventure's near-perfect multiplayer, 'Shadow Battle' seems rather weak – a problem that isn't helped by dull arenas.



△ In order to get past that glowing forcefield, you'll need to find the two ugly halves of the great fairy hidden in Hyrule castle.







△ The boomerang can be used to fetch any gems out of arm's reach.



△ Any fairies collected will revive you.



△ Keeping formation is the key to survival.



△ Touches like this maze made entirely of flame never cease to amaze.



THINK LINK

Four Swords wouldn't be possible without the GBA-GC link. When you enter a building, the view switches to the GBA, and the other players can't see what you're up to. In some cases you use the TV and GBA simultaneously, like taking aim on the GBA to hit overworld targets.

GBA and link cable. In single-player, one person controls all four Links simultaneously, a feat that's made all the easier thanks to the handy formation system, allowing you to hold horizontal or vertical lines of Links, diamond formations (for when you're surrounded on all sides) or a square formation. You can switch formation instantly with a quick flick of the C-stick.

As a single-player game it's surprisingly good fun, and we'll stand by the fact that it's enjoyable enough in its own right to warrant buying it (we'll get round to the exact reasons in a moment) but, as you're no doubt aware by now, the game really comes into its own with three extra players. Without the constraints of the single-player formation system, four Links are free to roam as they please (as long as they stay within the confines of the screen). The majority of the puzzles and challenges require all four of you to organise yourselves into an efficient unit, pushing blocks, depressing switches and chucking each other over chasms.

Communication is key, keeping your band of Links up to date with any discoveries or any ideas you have about how to progress. This in itself is enjoyable, but no sooner have you accomplished something together than Nintendo invite you to turn Judas, betraying your mates when it profits you the most. You see, each subsection of each area can be 'won' by an individual Link. Whoever has the most gems at the end wins – and this simple fact

RESCUE ME

It's 'save the girl' time yet again – but this time around it's with four Links and seven maidens… For the sweet, sweet love of Tingle, what is going on?



■ 'Shadow Link' has sealed seven maidens in purple crystals and shut them in dungeons across Hyrule. You must get them back by…



■ … pulling out a sword that splits you into four Links. Each with a snazzy coloured tunic. Time for classic top-down dungeoneering.



■ There's no real story. The 'normal' chatting and side quests between levels have been removed in favour of a level select.





△ Many of the puzzles are instantly recognisable from previous games.



△ You really need to see the game in motion to do it any justice.



△ Looks like Green Link's let rip in the water yet again…

utterly transforms the game into a laugh-a-minute riot. You'll complete puzzles with your mates with one eye on the booty rewarded at the end. You'll fight each other to claim the bigger gem prizes and mercilessly hack at each other in a vain attempt to gain the upper hand. As multiplayer games go we've never experienced anything that gets people so worked up and so vocal around a single TV screen – it's quite remarkable.

As for the single-player, well, it's a very different experience, and the formation system brings with it its own little satisfactions. The levelling up of weapons, for example, is tangibly more useful when you have a strict battle line of Links to maximise your power-up's potential. The inability of your Links to move around independently *and* simultaneously creates new logistical challenges for overcoming puzzles and, crucially – seeing as you don't have anyone to argue with – the game flows quicker and easier. So, no, as a single-player experience it doesn't suffer that much, although there's no denying you get more entertainment with the extra human players.

> **"NINTENDO INVITE YOU TO BETRAY YOUR MATES WHEN IT PROFITS YOU THE MOST"**

Four Swords is a strange game to have to score, really. In terms of the fundamentals of the game's design, it's one of the most well-crafted experiences we've played since *Super Mario World*, with Nintendo really showing off their skill at creating fun, amusing and unforgettable experiences. In our book it's worth splashing out for just for those moments. As a multiplayer game (albeit a rather expensive one with all those GBAs and cables) it's probably one of the finest you'll ever play, but if you want a true, single-player *Zelda* experience we'd advise thinking twice before forking out.

GERAINT EVANS



SPECIAL MOVES

For each Crystal Star you find you'll get a special power. The first is a treat to use if you're in the middle of a fight and low on health – it causes power-ups to fall from the sky that you have to hit using an aiming mechanism you might recognise from Yoshi's Island on the SNES and GBA. Great fun and almost a minigame in itself.



- Unique co-op/competitive play.
- Well-designed levels and puzzles.



- Need four people to get the most from it.
- Battle mode isn't that good really.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
Nintendo
NGC/91, 86%
The only other 'big' game that utilises the GBA-GC Link.



8 VISUALS
Not groundbreaking, but it's big on style and special effects.

7 SOUNDS
Tunes you've known for over ten years. Nothing remarkable.

9 MASTERY
The design of the puzzles and multiplayer dynamics is superb.

8 LIFESPAN
It's missing *Tetra's Trackers*, but with friends this will last.

VERDICT

An obscure Zelda game that's demanding on your pockets – but it's one of the finest multiplayer games ever.

NGC 89

msn Games

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△ Protect that bishop. Please do not let them bash him.



△ When camping trips go bad. Skegness next time, huh?


△ The corpse dynamics are impeccable. Watch 'em flop.








△ Art and Shergar get some strafing action going on. Equine special moves ahoy, Shoruyken… neigh.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	KONAMI
DEVELOPER	KROME
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



KING ARTHUR

Cavemen, Romans and horse-fighting – British mythology isn't what is used to be…

The film ripped apart the greatest British legend of them all, by portraying King Arthur and his knights as Roman soldiers whose only concern was fighting Saxons while dreaming of retiring to Tuscany. That it was directed by a man called Antoine Fuqua says everything you need to know.

This dismal game rips apart the beat-'em-up genre by putting the combatants on horseback. Honestly – on certain levels you play Lancelot or some other Italian riding a stallion. And these horse-'em-up sections are so far beyond mere badness, they're almost physically painful to endure.

You sit on this lumbering beast that takes half the width of the screen just to turn around, while infinite caveman types spawn from nowhere and rush towards you. Then you horse them to death by making the animal rear up and flap its front legs in the air. You can also swipe at them with a sword. Most of the time this doesn't kill them outright, cavemen being hardy fellows who don't even need to wear clothes in the winter, so you manoeuvre the horse over to where they fell, position its hooves in exactly the right spot, then press the 'trample' button to stomp them into the mud.

> "IT IS MINDLESS, TEDIOUS, BUTTON-MASHING RUBBISH"

It's hilarious. At least it would be if it weren't so sluggish and repetitive to play. The kindest option is simply to attempt to canter all the way to the end of the level, where there's a door that needs to be horsed down while more savages attack. But you'd better not trot too fast because there are men with spikes waiting to stab your trusty steed. To deal with these ones, you can lock on and strafe around them, which makes it look like you're entering a dressage contest, thereby putting an end to any noble Roman street cred you may once have had.

There's more than just the horse scenes but all of it is mindless, tedious, button-mashing rubbish. You get different characters to control, including a lovely Guinevere who can shoot arrows at the infinitely spawning Saxon caveman warriors. You even get cut-scenes taken straight from the film, so you can see glimpses of what you and everyone else missed at the cinema. It isn't good.

MARTIN KITTS



- Horse-fighting hilarity.
- Works on Nintendo Gamecube.



- Annoying story.
- Annoying characters.
- Rubbish gameplay.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
Konami
NGC/92 40%
Very similar except not so gloomy and a bit funnier.



4 VISUALS
Drab backgrounds, wooden animation, washed-out film clips.

5 SOUNDS
A lot of shouting and clanking, plus some 'inspiring' music.

2 MASTERY
One bonus mark for inventing the horse-'em-up genre.

3 LIFESPAN
Stunningly dull, poorly designed and not worth finishing.

VERDICT
There's a great game to be made from the Arthur legend, but this definitely isn't it. Avoid at all costs.

NGC 25

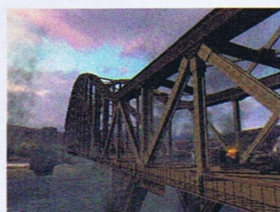


"Lemming-like assault on the German shooty holes"





△ A cosy little house of sand.



△ A bridge too far for the game's fractured plot. Blow it up.



△ You can take command of machine guns and mow down Nazis like some sort of swastika-happy shooting gallery.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

The object of this mission is to tear down a German swastika flag in a petulant act of mindless pinko Russkie vandalism. No wonder their feeble agricultural economy collapsed 40 year later.







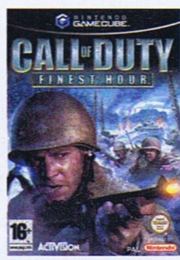


CALL OF DUTY

You don't play this game – you volunteer for it. Or is that a different World War II title? This one's fairly similar anyway…

INFO BURST

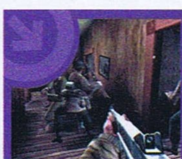
PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER	SPARK
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





You may have been born too late to have taken part in World War II (the one with Hitler as the end-of-level boss) but as a gamer you have plenty of chances to claim your share of the 56 million kills chalked up in history's nastiest conflict.

Two per cent of the world's population was exterminated, and in *Call of Duty: Finest Hour's* opening scene you get to witness a fair proportion of them getting chewed up by machine guns or crushed by falling masonry. You play a Soviet soldier attacking enemy positions in a ruined city. You don't have a gun, which is no problem since bullets won't stop those fiendish Nazis rolling huge metal pipes over your comrades.



HOUSE ARREST

This is war, so if you thought having nice wallpaper and stripped floorboards is going to stop armed men killing each other in your spare bedroom, think again. For the soldiers, it's a good chance to nose around and get some DIY ideas.

After defying the odds in the Soviet army's lemming-like assault on the German shooty holes, you lead a suicidal mission through trenches to destroy an enemy bunker. Your success and survival are made possible only through the availability of magical health packs and your soldier's resistance to bullet wounds – eventually he'll have so much lead in his body, he'll keel over from the weight of it.

That the rest of the game can't quite match the intensity of the first level is testament to the finely tuned pacing of this show-stopping encounter, but it probably isn't the realistic portrayal of war that it claims to be. When you're not cowering in a shell crater, wondering where to flee next, it's rather like *Doom* with old-fashioned guns and loads of Nazis running towards you.

> **"RATHER LIKE DOOM WITH OLD-FASHIONED GUNS AND NAZIS RUSHING AT YOU"**

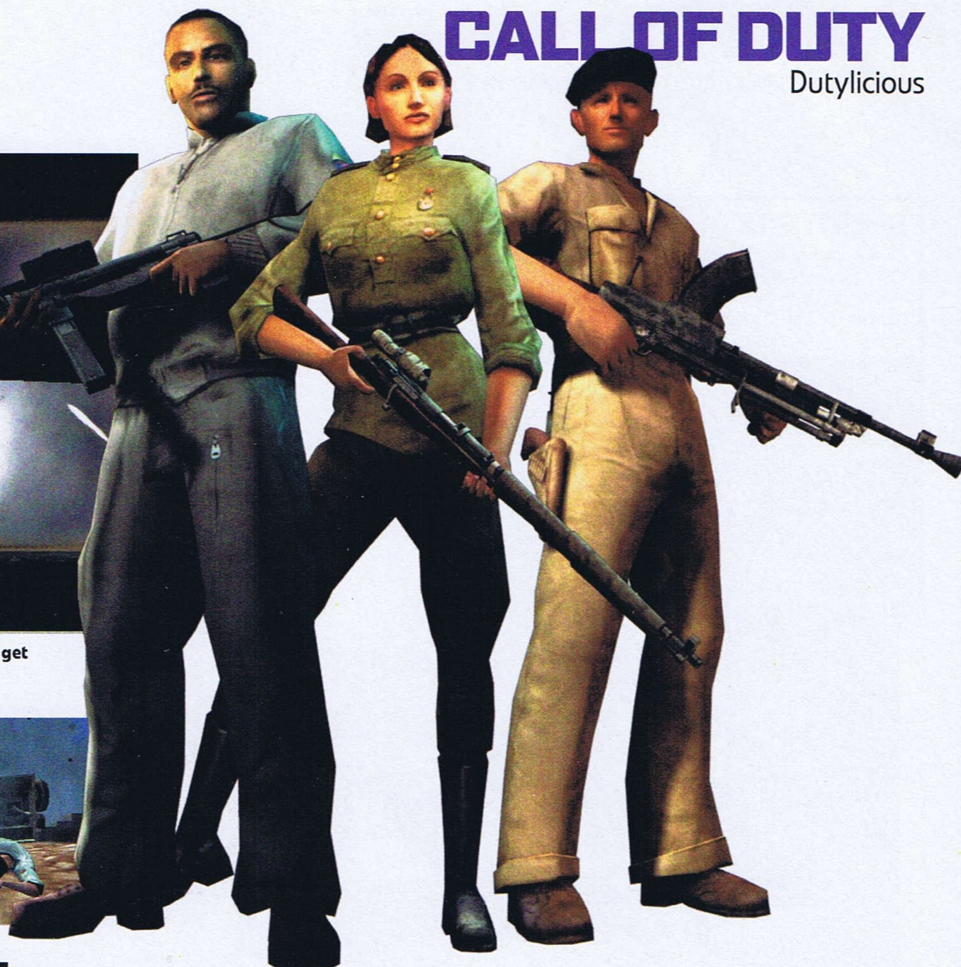
The obligatory gun/grenade/melée control system gives you the power to inflict satisfyingly enormous damage on the enemy



△ **This isn't a bit of widescreen cinematics – it's the view you get through the window of a tank. A flying tank. On the moon.**







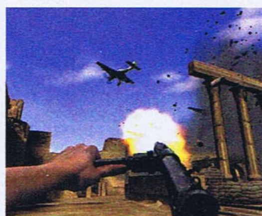
KILLING TIME

Some of the many things you can obliterate in the game…



TANKS

Driving these is great fun, although confusing from this third-person camera angle. Get into the driving seat for a claustrophobic first-person view.



PLANES

There's often something buzzing around in the sky, and it would be rude, not to mention completely out of character, if you didn't try to shoot it down.



ROCKET NAZIS

Okay, these blokes are on your side. But mostly it's the baddies who have rockets. Don't they look stupid? Like giant fireworks. They had rubbish weapons back then.



RUSSKIES

The commies are on our side too, so resist the urge to waste them in the name of freedom and the American way. It's a crazy world, where ape fights ape.



MORE NAZIS

They're everywhere! It's totally illegal to be a Nazi in modern Germany, but in those days it was practically obligatory. All the fashionable kids did it.

forces. Lob a grenade, spray a few bullets into the smoke cloud, and if anybody's still moving after that, crack him in the nose with the fat end of your gun. Then shoot him. You can only carry two weapons at a time, so when you're faced with a choice of a sniper rifle, a rocket launcher and lovely machine gun, one of them will have to be left behind for the scavengers.

The X and Y buttons make your soldier switch between standing, crouching and crawling stances, which affect speed of movement and vulnerability. Even with the on-screen indicator showing which stance you're currently using, it's commonplace to select the wrong one without realising you've changed anything, and the extra controls are an unwelcome distraction in what is generally an unrelentingly frantic game.

Taking multiple roles as you switch between Russians in Stalingrad, British in North Africa and Americans in Europe, there's never any emotional attachment to the characters or plot. At the end of each brief level, or even halfway through, you'll be whisked away to occupy a different body in a new campaign. Even if the characters you meet along the way actually survive, there's never any satisfactory resolution to the story.

Most of the time you'll be fighting alongside various helpful characters and a ready supply of expendable cannon fodder. In missions where you have to search buildings room by room, the artificial intelligence is good – your comrades will back you up if you want to kick down doors and go storming ahead, or they'll do the job themselves if you're running low on health. Eventually their luck runs out and they get gunned down, but you won't care because they're only drones anyway, and they'll be replaced just as soon as a clone can be dispatched from HQ.

Despite its brevity, *Call of Duty Finest Hour* is not a particularly easy game, due in part to the lack of checkpoints. There are only one or two of these in each mission, so you'll often have to repeat an annoyingly large section when you succumb to the hundreds of Nazi bullets whizzing through the air.

In general, you have to kill everything in order to make it safely to the next





SNIPEY SNIPEY

In the early sniper scenes you get to play a foxy Russian sniperess, who fires bullets into men from a great distance while looking cool in some tattered overalls. Twitchy aiming and too many enemies can make these parts a bit of a pain.

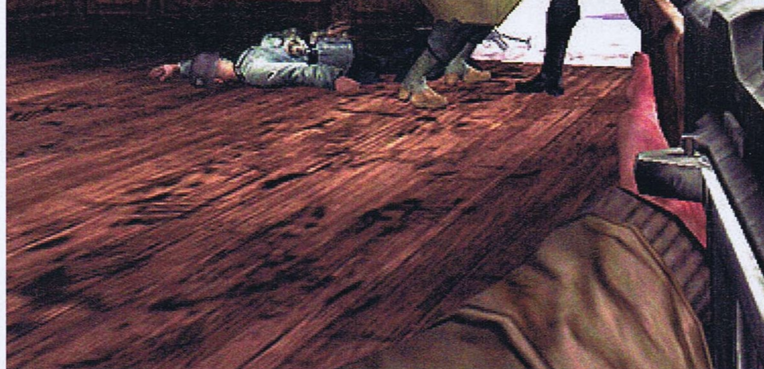
"A protracted dying swan animation"

SHOOTERS
Hold the aiming button to look directly down the barrel of your gun. If you have a sniper rifle (like you do in Stalingrad), you can look through the scope.



FRIEND OR FOE
It's reasonably clear which one is the good guy and which one is the evil German here, but try telling the two of them apart in the chaos of the battlefield.





BIG GUNS
Look at this chunk of American steel – it makes the Nazi weapons look like the toys they are. In fact it makes us feel like Rambo. Invincible! Come get some, you sausage-eating muthas!





Δ Looking down the barrel.



Δ No problem parking this one.



Δ There goes the neighbourhood.



Δ Wow, it's ancient Rome!

checkpoint, a task made more difficult by the similarity between your own soldiers' uniforms and the enemy's. At the kind of distance you'll want to keep between yourself and the German hordes, the only way to tell whether the figure crouching in the mud is friend or foe is to wait until he starts shooting. If he aims off the screen, he's probably on your side, but if you cop a bullet in the face, it's a fair bet he's one of them.

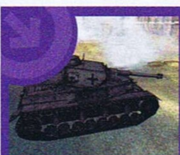
When things get busy you'll have to shoot first and ask questions once the corpses (and your conscience) have melted into the ground. Indiscriminate killing is definitely the most reliable way to beat the game, although it's all too easy to waste ammo shooting at an enemy who is merely playing out a protracted dying swan animation.

A handful of missions give you tanks to drive, which is a pleasingly destructive experience, and there are opportunities to take command of gun turrets at other points during the three campaigns. Whenever you gain a powerful weapon, you can rest assured that around the next corner there'll be a vicious squad of Germans armed with rocket launchers or something similar. It's incredibly predictable.

Perhaps we're too familiar with this sort of thing after the *Medal of Honor* series. If you haven't already overdosed on WWII games, or first-person shooters, you'll find *CoD's* the pick of the console crop. There's so much happening, you rarely get time to dwell on the game's flaws, which, while manifest, are nowhere near as common as in *MoH*. It's a solid start for a new franchise, and future instalments are likely to be worth looking out for.

MARTIN KITTS

"THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE COMMAND OF GUN TURRETS AT SOME POINTS"



GAME OVER
In the name of historical accuracy, WWII's fatalities included: 12.5m Chinese (10m civilians); 6.2m Germans (2.7m civilians); 25.6m Soviets (16.9m civilians); 2m Japanese (0.7m civilians); 5.8m Polish (5.7m civilians); 274,000 Brits (92,000 civilians); 298,000 Americans (6,000 civilians).



- Incredibly busy.
- Gritty visuals.
- Varied environments.



- Samey combat.
- A bit miserable.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
MoH: Rising Sun
EA
NGC/75, 67%
Not quite as polished as *Call of Duty*, but an equally impressive first level.



7 VISUALS
Grittily realistic, with loads of soldiers shooting each other.

6 SOUNDS
Sparse voice acting, rather unimpressive gun noises.

7 MASTERY
There's certainly an awful lot happening on the screen.

6 LIFESPAN
The lack of checkpoints increases the difficulty level.

VERDICT
The best World War II title on any console. Not perfect, but if waging war is your thing, *Call of Duty* is your game.

NGC 75

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THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

ON SALE THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER

TOP CHOP

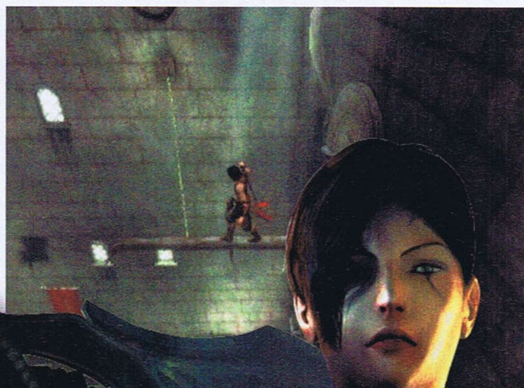
Here's a dramatic (and very effective) combo in action – we activated this one by pressing some buttons. Couldn't care less what it's called, but the way the enemy's body gets cleaved in two is dead nice.



PRINCE OF PERSIA
WARRIOR WITHIN

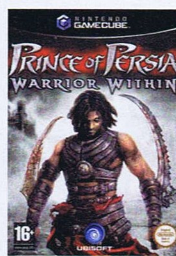


He's back – bigger, badder and hairier. Get ready for a royal rumble with the original cliff-hanging hero.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	21
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40





△ Having relieved one monster of its head, the Prince turns his attention to one of the elite female guards. It's easiest just to knock them over a precipice.

Most of the way through the excellent *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, fighting the evil Vizier's endlessly spawning minions was a fairly unwelcome distraction from the acrobatic exploration that was the game's most appealing feature. We knew it, the developers knew it…

Everyone who ever played it must have known the combat was a bit limp compared to the thrill of running along walls and leaping between flag poles hundreds of metres above the ground.

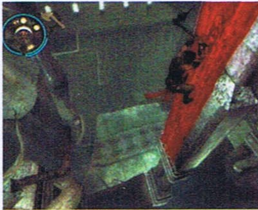
But instead of replacing quantity with quality, and really turning the fight scenes into something as polished as the rest of the game, they've gone and put even more emphasis on swordplay. Not at the expense of the other stuff, because there's more of everything here, but enough to make it more confusing and irritating than it needs to be.

It's the combos that add an unnecessary layer of complexity to what is essentially a simple fighting system. Tapping various buttons makes our hero vault off walls, spin around pillars, leapfrog enemies, steal weapons, and chop his foes in a variety of inventive ways. Remembering all that in the heat of battle – you've got to be kidding.

> **"YOUR FOES GET SLICED HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY AND EVERY WAY IN BETWEEN"**

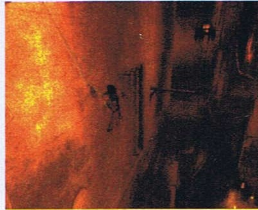
SPLITTING THE CURTAINS

And other funky techniques enjoyed by our Prince…



RIPPER

Leap into a curtain for a gentle ride to the ground. Unless the curtain stops 50 metres above the ground, in which case… jump!



ROPEY

You can climb these ropes or hold onto the end and run along the wall, which is great for getting good distance on your jump.



DRINKING

Water restores our man's health, so drink from anything wet – puddles, toilets, whatever. Actually, the castle has no toilets.



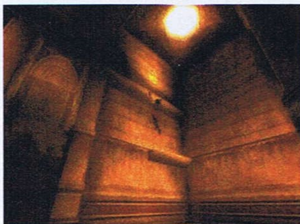
SLOWDOWN

If you don't mind wasting a bit of sand, you can slow everything while you walk around removing a few heads. Good for puzzles too.

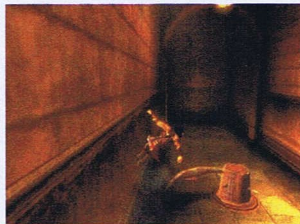


POLE DANCE

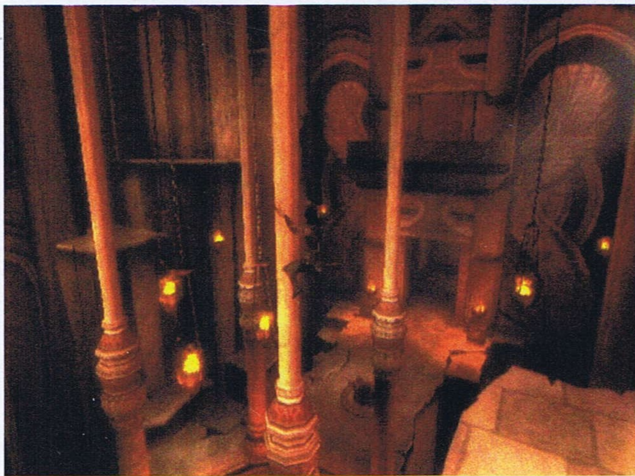
Mario pioneered this technique, and the Prince does it exactly the same way. How can he grip onto such fat poles? It's like magic.



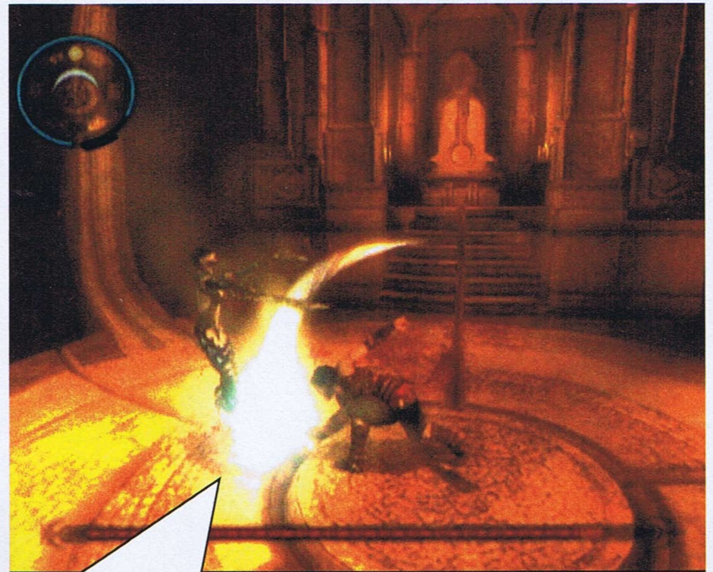
△ There he is, dangling on a crumbly old ledge like some sort of burglar.



△ Ride the walls to avoid getting your legs cut off by the blades.



△ Fortunately the game always lines you up in one of four basic directions on these poles, so you don't miss your target. It would be hellish otherwise.



LADY KILLER

For some reason the main enemies in the castle are female, and dressed in some very lovely outfits that really show off their assets while remaining practical enough not to fall off during a fight. The Prince doesn't care for looks, though, and he kills them all regardless of how nice their hairdos might be. He turned his own dad into a zombie, remember.



You've got six time powers and 13 movement techniques to learn. Easy enough. Whip out a sword and you get six right-handed moves, seven left-handed and six acrobatic attacks. Pick up a second sword and there's a whole new set of 15 right-handed, 17 left-handed and five acrobatic.

When the difference between one move and the next is just a single button in a sequence of many, and each one has a poncey name that makes it sound like a mediaeval Tony Hawk trick, it's totally ridiculous. In fact it brings to mind memories of C-list titles such as *Blood Rayne* or any number of 16-bit *Final Fight* clones.

Your payoff for learning the full list or, more likely, stumbling across a combo by button-bashing accident, is a slow-motion dismemberment animation. Your foes get sliced horizontally, vertically and every way in between. They melt away in a spray of blood and yellow light. It looks incredible.

If only the game didn't make you jump through hoops to see it. After a while we found our preferred option was to use a throw to launch enemies over the edge of the nearest fatal drop, because whittling away their health to the point where we could actually activate a finishing move took far too long.

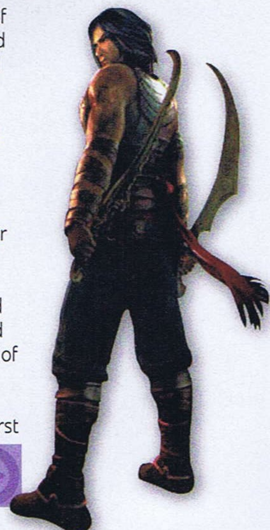
Anyway, the rest of it – fantastic. We just thought we might try getting our only serious complaint out of the way right at the start of this review. The darker theme and those worryingly gloomy red and black preview screens haven't prevented the on-screen game world shimmering with the same kind of golden glow as its predecessor. It's beautiful, and it begs to be explored.

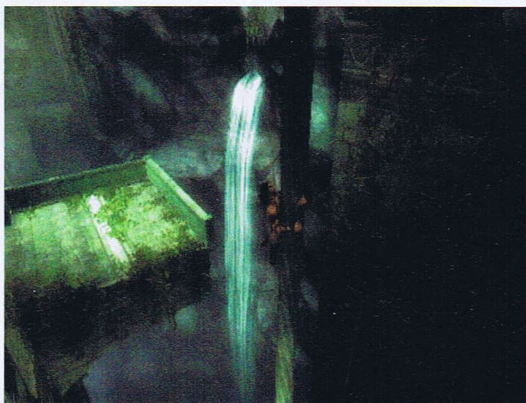
The story is set some time after the events of the last game, in which the dim-witted Prince destroyed his entire kingdom and turned his dad into a hollow-eyed zombie. Of course, he fixed most of the damage by meddling further with the sands of time that were the source of the trouble in the first place, but his intervention in fate's plan really got up somebody's nose.



PRINCE TRICKY

The Prince might not even consider trying some of the jumps he has to pull off if it weren't for his ability to reverse the flow of time when he makes a mess of it. Just make sure you rewind far enough, otherwise you'll only get to watch him fall to his death again. When you run out of sand power, it's for good.



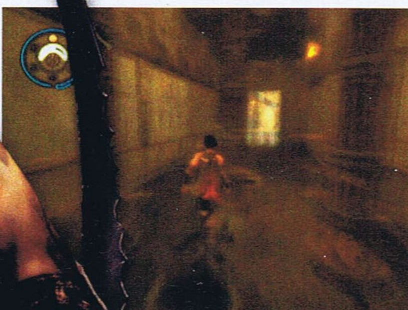

△ Every garden needs a giant stone pole and a water feature.



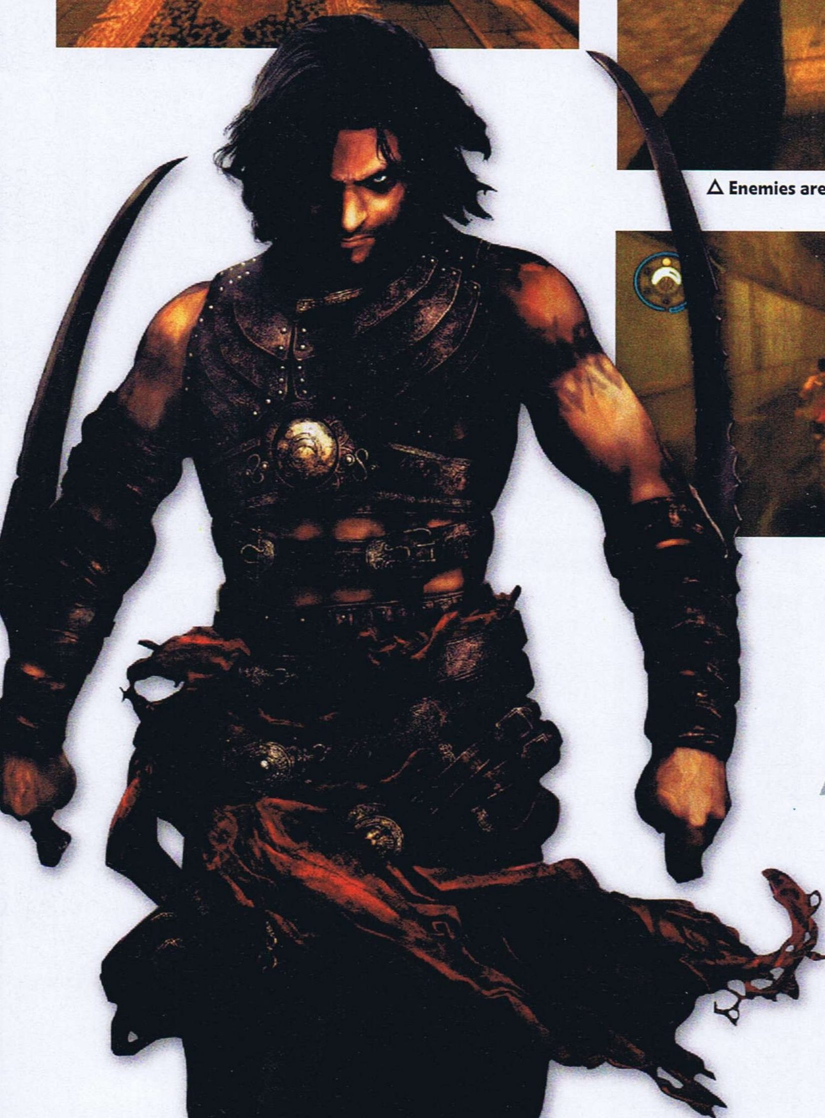





△ Enemies are still filled with light but you don't use a dagger to extract it. Shame, that.









Consequently our hero has spent years running away from the Dahaka, an unstoppable beast intent on ripping him a few new ones. His last chance is to visit the castle of the Empress of Time and travel back in history to prevent the sands ever being created.

Time has not been kind to the fresh-faced, naïve star of the last game. His boyish charm has vanished under a fuzz of hair and testosterone. He looks like he's been dipped in a bucket of pubes.

But he's still got the moves, and he'll be needing all of those old wall-running, pole-swinging tricks to escape the Dahaka and seal up those pesky sands. Again.

The Empress' castle is in a sorry state of repair at the start of the game, all grey and overgrown. Once the sands start flowing, stepping into the past restores crumbled brickwork and brings back that trademark *Prince of Persia* shine.

Nipping back in time also re-activates long-dead traps, some of

"HE'LL BE NEEDING ALL OF THOSE OLD WALL-RUNNING, POLE-SWINGING TRICKS"

PRINCE OF PERSIA

An edgier prince, a Dahaka tale…

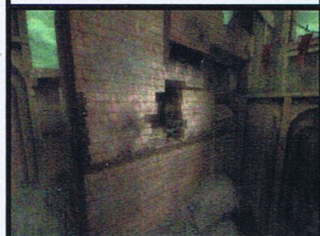
HIGH TIMES

This is a pure exploration room, but sometimes there are enemies on the highest rafters. Knock them off by lobbing your second sword at them, or just get stuck in as normal.



VERTIGO

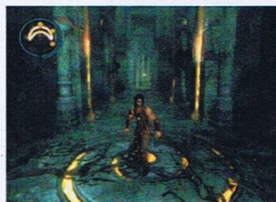
Switch to the fixed camera and you'll appreciate the scale of the level design here. In the shot below, the Prince is standing in the giant hole in the wall.



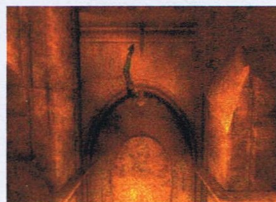
HOME FRONT

Give the place a lick of paint by stepping into the time portal and visiting the past. It's much nicer there, with golden walls to admire and deadly traps around every corner.

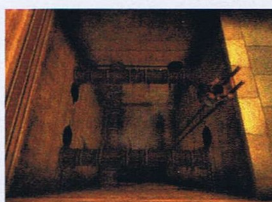




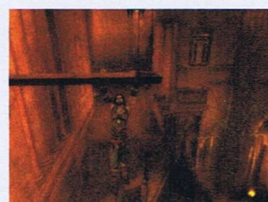
△ The time-skipping altar, present version. A bit mucky.



△ Vaulting off flagpoles is ridiculously good fun.



△ Watch for the spinning blades, then slide down the ladder.



△ This wooden beam won't break, so you can hang forever.

which are far trickier than in the last game. There are some classic scenes where you'll cap an incredible acrobatic sequence with something outrageous such as swinging along the wall, holding a rope in one hand, launching towards a pole, then reverse flipping off it onto a curtain drape, which the Prince will automatically slide down using a sword as a destructive brake.

Moments like that made us want to stand up and applaud the masterful combination of level design, animation and control mechanics that let us fulfil our superhero dreams better than any other game. And they happen again and again. In fact, you'll often have to repeat sequences in rooms you've already visited, as this Prince of Persia throws a little backtracking into the mix.

There's more exploration than last time, so taking a few minutes to survey each room's a must. Because there's never anything as obvious as a Mario-style floating platform, you'll be straining your eyes and the game's quirky camera to spot the tiny ledges and other disguised environmental features the Prince uses to get around.

Sometimes the exit to the next room might be through a tiny hole in the wall, tucked away almost out of sight. Sometimes you'll have to climb all the way to the top of a huge tower, or descend into the bowels of the castle. While it isn't exactly a free-roaming adventure, you're offered enough potential routes to make navigation just a touch too frustrating, given that the game's map is a barely functional piece of artwork.

At its best, this is a stunning platform game that offers more of the same. We don't like the combos, we don't like the Prince's new habit of growling boasts while fighting, and we think the rock soundtrack ought to be taken out to a quiet field and shot. But we like everything else about *Warrior Within*. If the series continues to develop in this manner, the next one's going to be like *Streets of Rage* with turbans. Catch it while it still remembers who it is.

MARTIN KITTS

BLOOD BATH

To fit the Prince's new, darker image, the game is very bloody. There's blood on the floors, blood squirting out of monsters… Even the Game Over screen has blood on, and looks just like the Resi equivalent. Heads get cut off and bodies get chopped in half too. It's lumbered with a 16 age rating.

TURN OVER FOR THE MAKING OF PRINCE OF PERSIA



- Thrilling acrobatics.
- Gorgeous locations.
- Rarely gets dull.



- Too many combos to remember.
- Too much fighting.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time
Ubi Soft
NGC/90 91%
The Prince's first, amazing, Gamecube outing.



9 VISUALS

Dusty, atmospheric and impressive, just like last time.

6 SOUNDS

We're not fond of the guitar soundtrack and shouty voices.

7 MASTERY

Who wants to remember hundreds of samey combos?

8 LIFESPAN

Not the longest game ever, but worth completing twice.

VERDICT

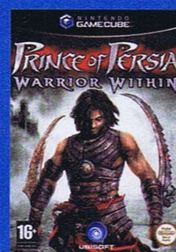
Great to look at, great to play. And happily, the good parts more than outweigh the slightly dodgy fighting.

NGC 88



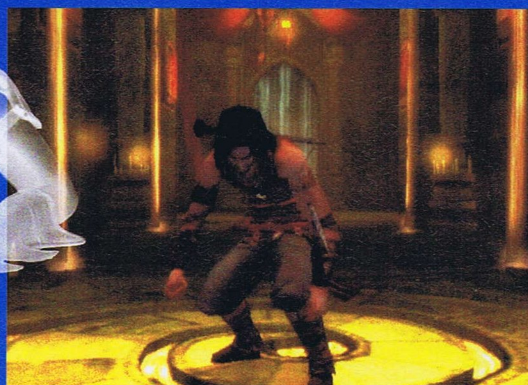
THE MAKING OF...

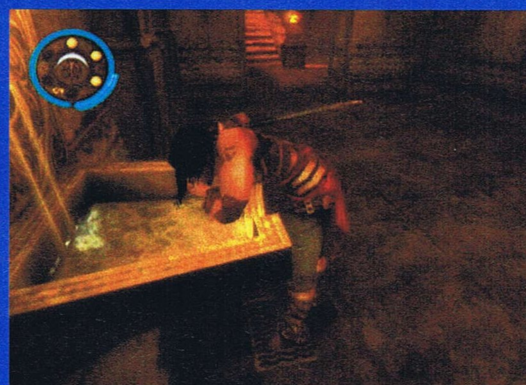
PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN



ngc00.boxes.war_with.jpg




△ Yup, he definitely looks a bit older and tougher.


△ Water restores health – well, they didn't have medikits then.

SPEED PAINTING

The artists on Warrior Within used this technique – a computer-based method of creating the environments and characters. You start with broad brushstrokes with your mouse, then gradually get down to the nitty-gritty. As you'd expect, it's quick.






Filed by: Mark Green



Yannis Mallat is sitting in an empty room in Ubi Soft's Montreal offices. "One week ago this place was filled with energy and life," he tells **NGC**. "Now there's no-one sitting in the chairs and the desks have been left empty. It's kind of sad."

The reason for the solitude of Yannis Mallat is that the day we telephone him is the day that Ubi Soft issues a press release announcing that *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* has "reached gold master status" – industry-speak for the final version of the game being ready to start its journey to the shops. There's a mass party in Montreal tonight to celebrate, and the Prince Of Persia team, finally unshackled from the game that's consumed their last 12 months, are off getting ready.

Meanwhile, Yannis, the softly-spoken 30-year-old producer on both *Warrior Within* and its prequel *Sands of Time*, chats to us about the year's hard graft that went into that gold master. He'll then head off for some hard partying, which is lucky for us: a Spanish journalist has an interview scheduled for 7am the next day. "I'm not sure I'm going to make it," laughs Yannis.

The follow-up to 2003's most pleasant gaming surprise properly began when a member of Yannis's team asked for his advice on some new, possibly controversial, ideas. "We had a small group of coders working on concepts for a *Prince of Persia 2* before the first game was finished," remembers Yannis. "They'd had some ideas for altering the character of the Prince, and they sat me down to ask me what I thought. With that small group, I decided that the original Prince was good value, but just not interesting. *Intriguing*, but not interesting. We concluded we had to give him an 'edge' – a darker, more mature look. And we actually compared

> "THE ORIGINAL PRINCE WAS JUST NOT INTERESTING. WE HAD TO GIVE HIM AN 'EDGE'"

TOUCH



Yannis and team were determined to cram neat touches into The Warrior Within*, after being surprised that a last-minute addition to* Sands of Time *– the way the Prince interrupts his narration to correct himself when you die ("No, no, that wasn't how it happened") – became one of the game's best-remembered bits. "Jordan Mechner, the original* Prince of Persia *author, suggested that," says Yannis. "It's the little things gamers seem to love."*



Publisher: Ubi Soft	Release date: 3rd Dec 04
Developer: Ubi Soft Montreal	Reviewed: **NGC**/102, 88% – see p.68 for the review.




△ The fighting's been given a good tweaking, with new combos and move sequences added – not to mention the inclusion of buckets of gore when you pull off a successful combo.



him with other game characters to make sure we got it right."

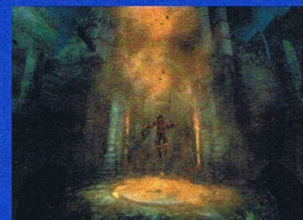
From a 'branding' perspective, this shift towards an older, edgier lead character was ideal. The Ubi Soft marketing folk loved the idea of a more mature follow-up to the relatively 'bright' *Sands of Time*. But it also meant Yannis and the team could surprise Prince of Persia fans with a non-indentikit sequel (everyone hates sequels that are more like rehashes), reach the kind of gamer who thought *Sands of Time* wasn't for them and, most importantly for Yannis, give the artists and coders the freedom to express themselves in a new way. "If we'd have done the same thing again I'm sure we would have lost more than we'd have gained," Yannis says.

After a mammoth hiring process that saw 60 new people hopping on board the good ship Ubi Soft – most of whom were experienced coders from Canada and France – proper work began at the tail-end of 2003. Having had time to read their fill of reviews highlighting *Sands of Time's* flaws (most reviewers felt it had repetitive fights, shallow play and was a bit short) the team made fixing them a priority. Meanwhile, the storyline, which sees the Prince facing certain death at the hands of time monster Dahaka, was fleshed out, and not just in terms of cut-scenes, as Creative Director Jean-Christophe Guyot explains.

"WE TOOK A LOT OF INSPIRATION FROM CLOAK-AND-DAGGER SPY MOVIES"

"We took a lot of inspiration from cloak-and-dagger spy movies," he says. "A lot of movement, and a lot of speech, went into the fighting. That's why we chose to have dialogue between the Prince and his enemies as they fight. The idea is to develop the personality of the bad guys. Suddenly characters have more depth, their own goals and ideals, and it's not just good versus evil any more, it's two destinies colliding. We actually enlisted the help of

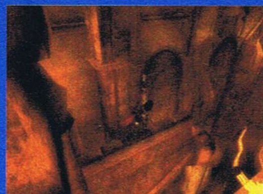


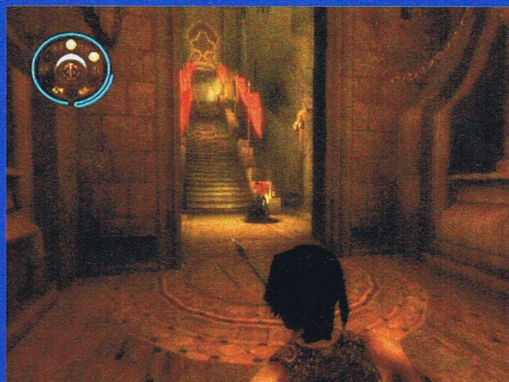
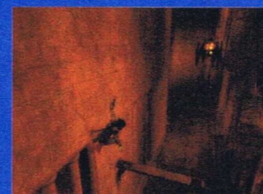


FIGHTY



Back at E3, Jean-Christophe Guyot gave an insight into The Warrior Within*'s new 'freeform fighting'. "The Prince is acting with more strength and aggression – we paid special attention to the diversity and visual impact of finishing moves, and put a lot of effort into the richness of animation in moves like the double sword decapitation. We wanted to give players a new sense of power."*

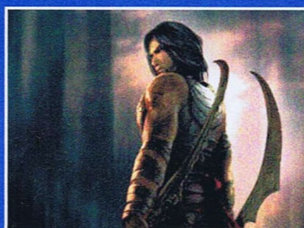


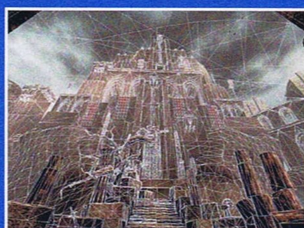

△ Just about every location has places you can climb up, drop off, swing on or use in some way to progress.

PRINCE CHARMING

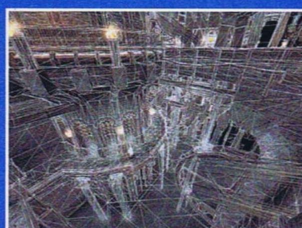
How Mikael Labat – Artistic Director on *Warrior Within* – described work on the game's visuals back in May.



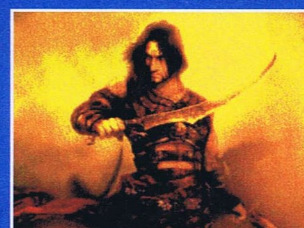
1 "We started by defining the new emotions we wanted people to feel in *Warrior Within* – namely, fear and oppression… visually, I wanted the emphasis to be more realistic, in order for players to be totally captivated by the game."



2 "Each location in the game has a unique and dramatic mood and atmosphere that will help the player orient himself. A game like *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* allows each artist in our team to express themselves in very diverse universes."



3 "We had to focus on colour, light, textures and detail in a unique and very specific way. I love the use of a monochromatic palette – it helped us to build the consistency throughout the levels, provide emotions, and put forward key gameplay and plot elements."



4 "[The Prince] is now a real warrior, very self-confident, but also marked by fate. He is cursed by what is hunting him. The player will feel this character's rage, a certain violence in his attacks, and an enormous determination to face his destiny."



a proper Hollywood script-doctoring agency to ensure we had a professional storyline."

As a result of some serious planning that prevented the kind of drastic last-minute cuts that had threatened the first *Prince of Persia*, work on *Warrior Within* went super-smoothly. The fighting was bloodied up with violent finishing moves and 'freeform fighting', bosses chopped from the old game (such as the mighty Griffin) were brought back in, and the team prevented continuity problems within the complicated time-hopping plotline by designing a unique online flowchart. With a single mouse-click coders could see the exact consequences of the player's possible actions in each time zone.

"It was important for us to break the linearity of *Sands of Time*," says Yannis. "But when you take two timelines – the past and present – and allow the player to switch between them pretty much at will, you're looking at hell. Right up to the last two weeks before the gold master, we were still trying to make sure all the save points and checkpoints were working properly. But the result is an amazing level of immersion for the player."

For a game whose daddy had bowled over everyone with its stunning gold-tinged vision of 9th century Persia, visuals were crucial too, as Guyot explains.

"With *Sands of Time* we worked hard to bring out that dreamy, glowing Arabian Nights feeling," he says. "This time, we developed a new style, and the time-travelling plot allowed us to create a mix of Greek and Persian cultures. We tried to mimic the kind of colour tints they used in the The Lord of the Rings movies, worked hard on getting the camera angles right, and used blue as a focus rather than the golds and whites of the last game. It required a lot of direction to get right."

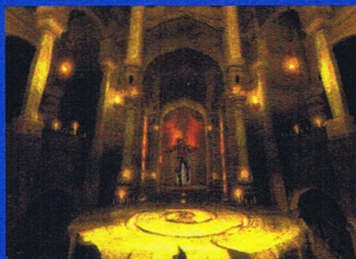
Everything was set for a spellbinding unveiling of the team's work so far at the E3 expo in May 2004. But while Yannis was walking the showfloor to check out the competition ("lots of sequels – disappointing"), the *Prince of Persia 2* demo – which saw the new, angry Prince slicing off heads on a

"TIME-TRAVELLING ALLOWED US TO CREATE A MIX OF GREEK AND PERSIAN CULTURES"

EVIL



Unlike the swaggering, screeching she-zombies of Sands of Times*, The* Warrior Within *is deliberately filled with unpleasant gribblies that reflect the darker nature of the game. "We wanted them to appear fierce and frightening," Artistic Director Mikael Labat said at E3, "showing attitudes and moves that were as distinctive as possible."*



△ Chasms are great for hurling enemies into – that's the quick way to get rid of them.





stormswept ship, showing off his new curtain-slide and pillar-swing moves and hammering a giant ogre on the back – was generating a rumble of discontent among *Sands of Time* fans. Some accused the team of 'selling out' with the darker, bloodier visuals.

This, and some less-than-brilliant review scores for the final game, get Yannis uncharacteristically frustrated. "I'm a little confused because the game is twice as long, the fighting much better, the game much deeper," he says. "We are expressing an art direction that if you don't like – well, that's your problem. But you shouldn't prioritise your subjective feelings over the quality of the game itself. Maybe certain people don't like dark games, don't like violence. But they have to accept that at least *Warrior Within* is *different*. That makes it good value for money."

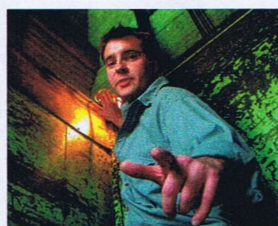
You can now find out for yourself if Yannis and the rest of the team were right, because the game is in the shops. To ensure *Warrior Within* actually met its terrifyingly tight deadline and made it onto the shelves this month, a team of five of Ubi Soft Montreal's best testers were brought in to sit among the actual coders, playing the game intensively on development kits so that the team could fix any problems 'live' as they occurred. Despite Yannis's optimistic estimates, the game had as many last-minute bugs to iron out as its predecessor – leading to plenty of frustrated faces when the team worked until the early hours to get a 'final' version finished, only to have it boomerang straight back into their faces with a long list of problems attached.

To the relief of Yannis's bosses, though, *Prince of Persia: Warrior Within* met its deadline. And so it's party time.

"It's like celebrating a birth, says Yannis," who we can almost hear adjusting his party bowtie. "But it's also a way of dealing with post-deadline trauma. My guys were working like hell for months, and now they're asking themselves 'Who am I? What am I supposed to do?' So a good party helps. I've got to give a speech, and I'll tell them this: go out and spend all that money you've earned!"

"THE GAME IS TWICE AS LONG, THE FIGHTING MUCH BETTER, THE GAME MUCH DEEPER"

ENDGAME

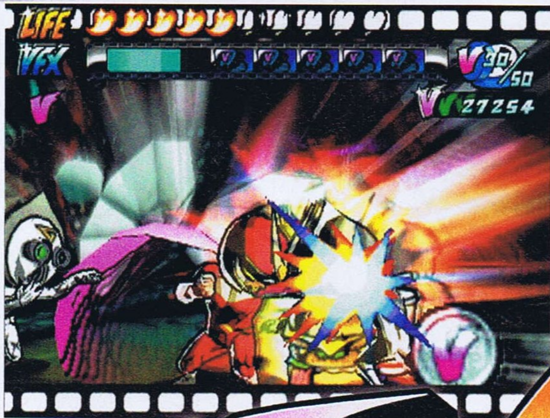


The core members of the Prince of Persia team "relaxed in an intimate way with champagne and beer" immediately after 'gold status' was achieved; but it's the party described in the main text will that see the team really celebrating Warrior Within *being done and dusted. Although it's a multi-purpose shindig that also celebrates the completion of other big Ubi Soft projects such as PC monstro-adventure* Myst 3, *Yannis promises there'll be "VIP treatment" for the* POP:WW *team.*



"The gaming equivalent of a stinging slap to the face"





Viewtiful Joe 2

Capcom's stylish scrapper still has plenty of viewtiful va va voom…

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
RELEASE DATE	NOW (US) MAR (UK)
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	17
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO



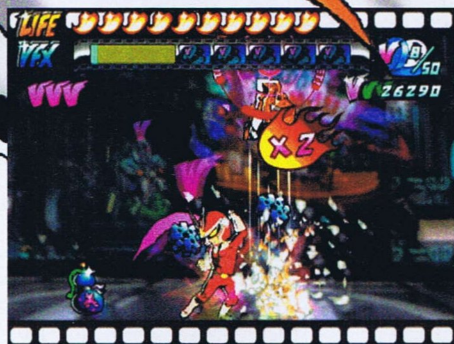


△ See that? Just call us Cpt. Mad Skillz. Seriously.

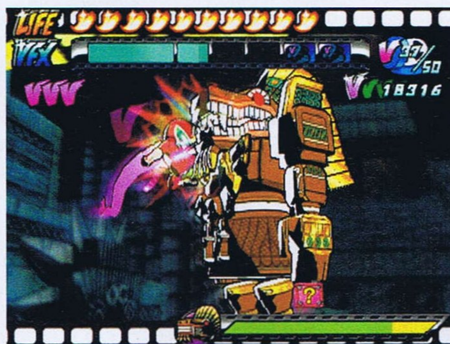
When something like *Viewtiful Joe* sneaks up on you, dealing out the gaming equivalent of a stinging slap to the face, it's hard not to feel invigorated. We're talking about a game that's so familiar, yet very different at the same time – the original *VJ* injected 550ml (or thereabouts) of pure 'Zing' (surely no other word can describe it) directly into our frontal lobe. On the week it arrived in the office it left us reeling. People stood and stared as we played non-stop. Joypads were hurled in frustration. Shrieks of delight at the game's ingenious and exasperating puzzles' filled the air with astonishing regularity. It was fresh, it was exciting and it was so difficult that it stimulated parts of our brain that nothing had touched since *Ikaruga*.

The same can't be said for *Viewtiful Joe 2*. It's pretty much more of the same. Not necessarily a bad thing, but there's no denying that the element of surprise is nowhere near as strong as it was for the boy superhero's first outing. It's hardly a breath of fresh air.

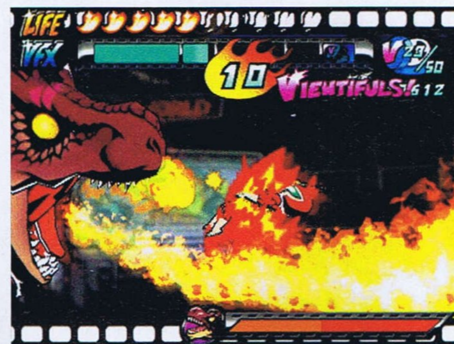
However, given that the original title was hardly Capcom's best-selling game, it's fair to say that anyone getting their first taste of *Viewtiful Joe* with this sequel has something special to look forward to. If you were one of the minority wise enough to pick up the first game, you can console yourself



△ Dodge, hit 'Slow' and then try to rack up the combos.



△ This is possibly the campest boss you'll ever face.



△ On fire? Use Mach Speed to put out the flames.

△ You need to use special abilities to activate some switches – here we're using a spinning kick that hits several times in succession.

with the fact that, bar a few changes, you're in for pretty much the same kind of high-quality experience found in the previous game. Excellent…

Structurally, *VJ2* follows the same formula as its predecessor. Levels consist of a series of separate sections. These take the form of environmental puzzles and encounters with a variety of enemies, from simple drones to airborne enemies and mini-bosses. Complete a section and you're graded from 'C' (Crappy) and 'B' (Bad) to 'A' (Awesome) and, the top rating, 'V' (Viewtiful).

You need to dispatch enemies as efficiently (or Viewtifully) as possible. The more stylishly you fight and solve puzzles, the greater your ranking and, ultimately, the more 'Viewtifuls' you'll earn. Viewtifuls serve as the game's currency, which you can spend on character-enhancing upgrades like new moves, and these in turn allow you to battle with even more grace and flair.

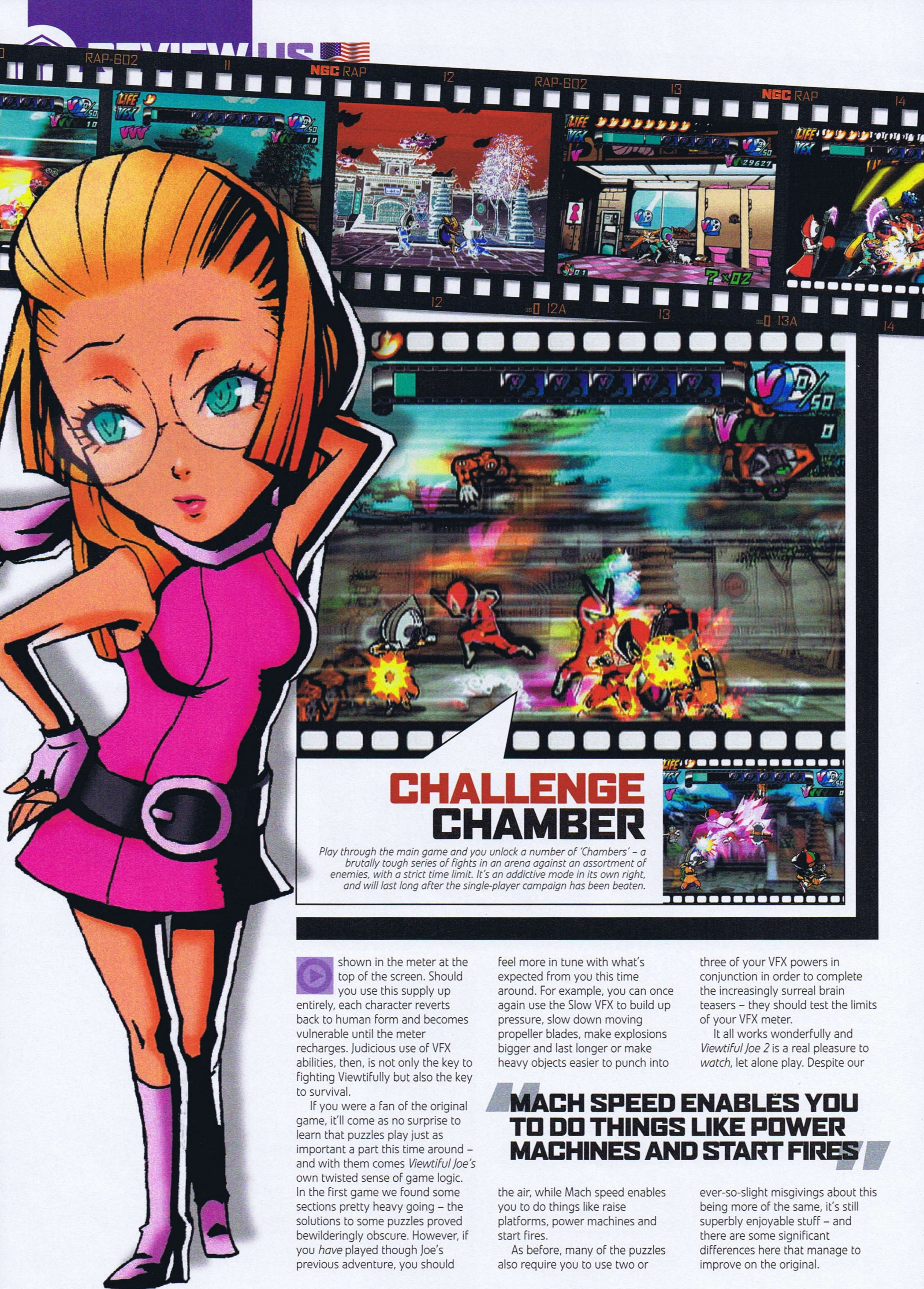
"THE MORE STYLISHLY YOU FIGHT AND SOLVE PUZZLES, THE GREATER YOUR RANKING"



GET ON WITH IT

Although we do love the silly cheesiness of VJ2, on more than one occasion, especially leading to boss battles, some of the cut-scenes can be a bit much – they last ages when all you want to do is just get on with the dirty business of giving everything a sound spanking.

Underpinning this basic structure are the characters' VFX abilities. (Yes, characters – Joe's good lady Sylvia is now playable too.) These are special effects triggered by the two shoulder buttons and the C-stick. Slow, Mach Speed (or Replay for Sylvia) and Zoom make possible spectacular moves for each character, allowing them to do movie-style things like dodge bullets, knock enemies into each other in a chain reaction, start combos and dish out unholy amounts of damage. These VFX powers are finite, however, and you can only use them if there's enough VFX



CHALLENGE CHAMBER

Play through the main game and you unlock a number of 'Chambers' – a brutally tough series of fights in an arena against an assortment of enemies, with a strict time limit. It's an addictive mode in its own right, and will last long after the single-player campaign has been beaten.

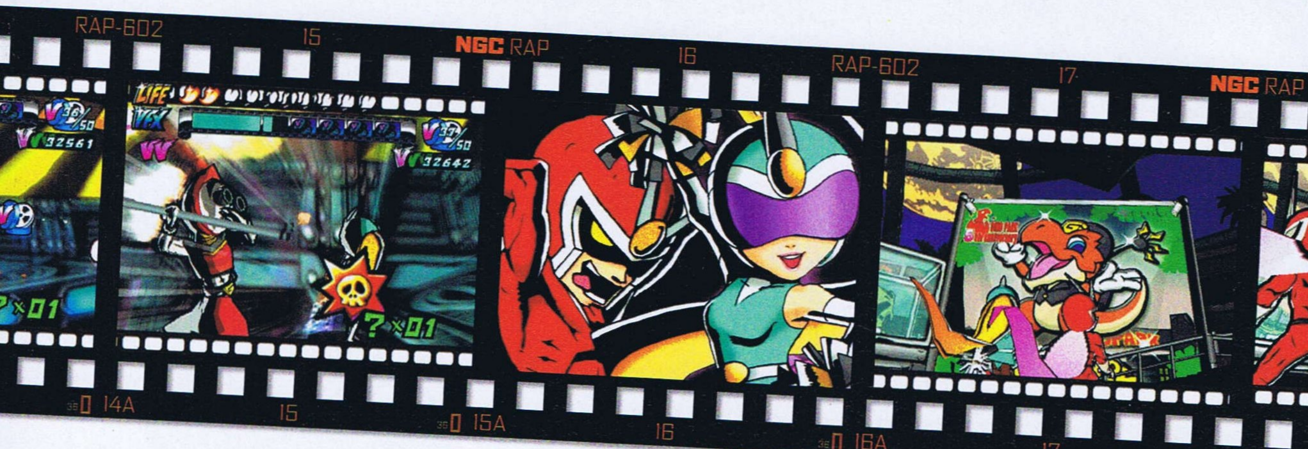
shown in the meter at the top of the screen. Should you use this supply up entirely, each character reverts back to human form and becomes vulnerable until the meter recharges. Judicious use of VFX abilities, then, is not only the key to fighting Viewtifully but also the key to survival.

If you were a fan of the original game, it'll come as no surprise to learn that puzzles play just as important a part this time around – and with them comes *Viewtiful Joe's* own twisted sense of game logic. In the first game we found some sections pretty heavy going – the solutions to some puzzles proved bewilderingly obscure. However, if you *have* played though Joe's previous adventure, you should feel more in tune with what's expected from you this time around. For example, you can once again use the Slow VFX to build up pressure, slow down moving propeller blades, make explosions bigger and last longer or make heavy objects easier to punch into the air, while Mach speed enables you to do things like raise platforms, power machines and start fires.

As before, many of the puzzles also require you to use two or three of your VFX powers in conjunction in order to complete the increasingly surreal brain teasers – they should test the limits of your VFX meter.

It all works wonderfully and *Viewtiful Joe 2* is a real pleasure to *watch*, let alone play. Despite our ever-so-slight misgivings about this being more of the same, it's still superbly enjoyable stuff – and there are some significant differences here that manage to improve on the original.

"MACH SPEED ENABLES YOU TO DO THINGS LIKE POWER MACHINES AND START FIRES"



+
- Gorgeous.
- Ingenious puzzles.
- Satisfying combat.
- Challenge mode.

−
- Not as fresh feeling as the original.
- May be too tough for some…

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Viewtiful Joe
Capcom
NGC/84 90%
The original. It's tough and unforgiving, but a good £20 cheaper…





△ If you have enough power in your VFX meter, Joe and Sylvia can team up for some monster attacks.



△ As ever, mini-bosses pop up between levels…



△ …to keep you constantly on your toes.



△ The little skull icons are back to give you advance warning of where attacks are going to come from.

TWO'S COMPANY

Behind every successful man, so the saying goes, there's the love of a good woman – and Joe is no exception…



Sylvia's blaster replaces Joe's punch. It can be upgraded to twin blasters and the ability to lock on to up to eight enemies at a time.



You can switch between characters at any time. Hold down Z to charge up a dual character attack that damages any enemies in the area.



Sylvia's Replay move triples any damage given out or received, but it's not great in battle – we only used it for solving puzzles.

This one's slightly less pad-smashingly frustrating, for a start. It's still not what you'd call an easy game, but it's certainly more forgiving. Checkpoints are more evenly (and fairly) spaced, making failure a little easier to bear as you never have too far to go to replay a difficult section.

The addition of Sylvia as a playable character from the offset also adds to the experience. Tapping Z lets you swap between the two characters at any time, and using each character's unique abilities is essential to solving some of the game's puzzles. What's more, Sylvia and Joe don't just have individual VFX powers, there are other advantages to using both. Switching between the two offers you more freedom when it comes to tackling enemy encounters, because Sylvia has greater range using her guns whereas Joe's particularly adept at dishing out massive damage to bosses.

This really is as good as over-the-top stylised violence gets. It's never repetitive, thanks to the puzzles and huge variety of enemies, and it always manages to put a smile on your face – even when you're being mercilessly pounded into the ground. Maybe it's the fact that, unlike most fighting games, it doesn't take itself too seriously, wearing its relentless silliness on its sleeve, that makes us love it. There's lashings and lashings of nauseatingly cheesy dialogue in here – all of it completely intentional. There are film references, horribly overblown B-movie-style acting, hilariously stupid characters and a quite absurd plot that parodies anything and everything (including itself). It's quite possibly the daftest game story we've come across. And despite this, it can't hide the fact that it's actually a much *cleverer* game than most – and it's for this reason that we're still very, very fond of the kind of experience *VJ* has to offer.

Capcom have done their bit. They've delivered another high-quality and original (compared to most other stuff) brawler, and all that remains now is for you to do your bit and go out and buy it when it comes out over here in March. Trust us, you won't regret it for a second…

GERAINT EVANS



DIRECTOR'S CUT

Many of the conventions of Viewtiful Joe can be hard to grasp – especially knowing how best to achieve high ratings on the more difficult levels. Luckily you can unlock a series of cryptic director's tips, which are accessible between levels. Heeding these wise words will improve your performance significantly.

8 VISUALS
Garish cel-shading, sweet effects and all beautifully animated.

8 SOUNDS
Corny dialogue and some remixes of the original's best tunes.

8 MASTERY
Probably the best designed 2D brawler you'll come across.

8 LIFESPAN
Very tough in places. Go through it on each difficulty.

VERDICT
Lacks surprise, but makes up for it with some welcome changes. One of the best action games you'll ever play.

NGC 87

15 THINGS NINTENDO WISH THEY'D NEVER SAID...

Why Nintendo should lock their mouths and throw away the key.



15 "Make us a DK rap!"

Aeons before the honking ape learnt to bongo, Nintendo gave him a musical twist with a rap contest, asking fans to yabber street-style over *Donkey Kong 64's* appalling intro theme. Nintendo's hopes of a street cred boost went toilet-ward as it was treated to excruciating 'rhymz' like "My fingers go snap and my toes don't stop/It's time to rap to the DK rap" (that from one of the winning entries), and at least one rap fan questioned whether it was "another form of hip-hop exploitation".

14 "Will you get the girl, or play like one?"

Infamously enlightened *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* TV ad slogan that successfully alienated a nice healthy chunk of Nintendo's audience. Over seventy complaints to the Independent Television Commission later (just over half the number received for the Halford's bike-riding chimp ad from last year – *interesting*), Nintendo were presumably ready to repeatedly slam their marketing people's heads in a vice. However, the ITC turned down the complaints, and GBA SP's "For Men" tagline shows Nintendo are back on track. We're told Revolution's slogan will be "Girls smell".







13 "Your guarantee of quality."

Aiming to restore faith in an '80s console market ruined by unofficial tat, Nintendo appeased worried parents by slapping this Seal of Quality on every NES game box as a guarantee of its officiality. It worked, too. But the shiny spiky thing's *other* job – fooling people into thinking every single game for every single Nintendo console met the company's standards in entertainment value "most of all" – must have led to more than a few angry 'phone calls from mums and dads who bought, say, *Donkey Kong Jr. Maths*. Those three little words have since disappeared.






Nintendo

SQUARESOFT

12 "Squaresoft will never work for Nintendo."

A Yamauchi blast from March 2001, the Nintendo president yelling through a loudspeaker at trembling reporters that the *Final Fantasy* developers were "free to say whatever they want, but we have no intention of signing a contract, and there's little chance of one being signed in the future." Two years later, he was machine-gunning signature ink at any Square-related contract that passes his way, including one that saw him pumping his *own cash* into Square offshoot and *Crystal Chronicles* team Game Designers Studio. Hiroshi Yamauchi is 77.



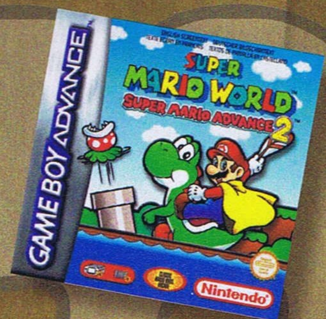
11 "The 64DD is coming!"

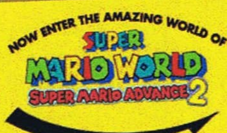
Announced alongside the Nintendo 64 in 1995, the 64DD was a uniquely Nintendo face-slap for anyone who moaned about the console's restrictively small cartridges. This add-on disc drive promised big-scope concepts like downloadable games "from satellite sources", worlds that continued to exist even when the machine was off, and – we've heard this before – online gaming. "Think about some of the possibilities!" said a Nintendo spokesperson. "Here's a very slightly remixed *Ocarina of Time*!" said Shigeru Miyamoto.

By 1999, most planned 64DD games had already been switched to cart, and Shigsy was muttering that he could not "always be optimistic about the launch of the 64DD". It ended up on Japanese shop shelves eventually, though – a clunky slab of black plastic, only available through a strange rental agreement, with discs like *Doshin the Giant* that clunked and grinded like a WWII-era aeroplane starting up. It died almost instantly, and thoughts about bringing it to the US and UK were unsurprisingly rethunk.









INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 is an action-packed game featuring Mario and Luigi in a mission to rescue Princess Peach. Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 has earned an "E" (everyone) rating by the independent Entertainment Software Rating Board. Games rated "E" are suitable for persons age six or older.

Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 is actually two games in one: a recreation of the Super NES classic Super Mario World (featuring 96 levels) and a single-player or four-player version of the original Mario Bros. arcade game. Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 is compatible only with Game Boy Advance. It cannot be played on Game Boy Color or monochromatic Game Boy units.

Super Mario World: Super Mario Advance 2 is designed for one to four players. One or more Game Boy Advance Game Link Cables are necessary for multiplayer action. Some multiplayer modes require only one Game Pak, while others require each player to own a Super Mario

10 "Super Mario World has 96 levels!"

No, *Super Mario World* has 96 *exits*. There are 72 levels, and an extra 24 hidden routes to find. But Nintendo eats facts like this for breakfast, so the original promotional material *and* adverts for the GBA remake have featured those two towering digits of falsehood. As a result, Ninty's only got itself to blame that "Where is level 96?" was the third most common question pitched to the hassled 'Game Counsellors' at Nintendo HQ in 1993. Fact!



Buena Vista



9 "Please make a Mario movie, Mr Hollywood."

Buena Vista fed 48 million dollars into the making of Super Mario Bros: The Movie. In the 11 years since the film's release it's recouped only $20 million of that – the same that fellow May '93 opener Cliffhanger made *in only its first weekend*. Not surprising for a film that turned Yoshi into some kind of walking flame-grilled chicken, and boasted the tagline, "This Ain't No Game – It's a Live-Action Thrill Ride!". Shigsy said at the time, "I'm pleased to hear that the director hasn't distorted the Mario image." That man, really…

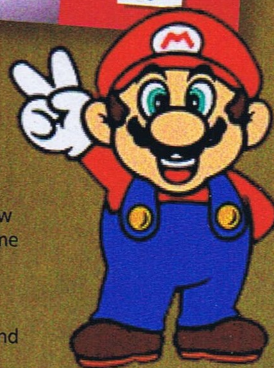


8 "N64 is now £100 cheaper!"

Everyone and their wallet loves a console price cut. *Except* when that price cut comes just a few weeks after the machine was first launched, upsetting tens of thousands of people who'd barely untied their shoelaces after coming back from the shops with a nice and spendy £250 console. The postie was soon lugging sackfuls of angry letters through Nintendo's door, and the company ended up cramming copies of *Mario Kart 64* in the mouths of complainers to shut them up. Then cutting the price again in October just to ram the point home.



7 "We're making a more mature Mario."



Shigsy's moment of maximum wrongness. Back when Gamecube was still just a few morsels of gossip pie, he told journalists that "it is time that [Mario and Luigi] became a bit more grown-up," pointing expressly to Mario's V sign which he described as "childish". The Speculation Machine was running at full tilt over the wisdom of this bizarre turn – until *Super Mario Sunshine* came trundling down the Nintendo conveyor belt, complete with a Mario who was riding about on a dinosaur's back and yelling 'woo!' and 'hup!' as though nothing had happened. Bewildering.



Nintendo

6 "We are a Kyoto developer."

In an interview with **NGC** predecessor Super Play during the golden *Super Mario World* and *Zelda: Link to the Past* era, Shigsy said that the secret to Nintendo's success was that they were based, not in Tokyo, but a three-hour bullet train ride away in the nicer, friendlier, *relaxier* Kyoto area.

"The taste of a Kyoto game is different from that of a Tokyo game," he chuckled, stroking his banjo. "We Kyotoites… keep in mind that we should always make better games than ever [and] are proud of making people laugh." Nice – except Nintendo have since decided to move right out of Kyoto and into an incomprehensibly sterile milk carton of an office in the cold, anonymous heart of Tokyo. Since when we've been given *Pokémon Channel*. Mmm.





5 "Resident Evil 4 is Gamecube exclusive."

See last issue's Newsdesk for the full horror – a Capcom-caused crisis that's given Nintendo fresh nightmares. The sunny, carefree days of Shinji Mikami telling us that *Resi 4* is "not on another console, and if it happens I will cut my head off" have given way to "a recent executive decision from Capcom Japan to begin development of the game for the PS2." Livid Nintendo fans are already acting like the crazy-eyed frighten-o-villagers from the game, and that guy with the big chainsaw and a sack on his head is approaching Mr Mikami's office as we speak.



...OOB TOYS, INC., Plaintiff-Appellee, v. NINTENDO OF AMERICA, INC., Defendant-Appellant. NINTENDO OF AMERICA, INC., Plaintiff-Appellant, v. LEWIS GALOOB TOYS, INC., Defendant-Appellee.

No. 91-16205

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

964 F.2d 965; 1992 U.S. App. LEXIS 11266; 22 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1857; Copy. L. Rep. (CCH) P26,919; 92 Cal. Daily Op. Service 4313; 92 Daily Journal DAR 6869

March 12, 1992, Argued and Submitted, San Francisco, California

May 21, 1992, Filed

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY:

Amended August 5, 1992, Reported at 1992 U.S. App. LEXIS 17680.

PRIOR HISTORY:

[**1] Appeal from the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. D.C. No. CV-90-1586 FMS. D.C. No. CV-90-1440 FMS. Fern M. Smith, District Judge, Presiding.

CASE SUMMARY

PROCEDURAL POSTURE: Defendant-appellant sought review after the United States District Court for the Northern District of California held that plaintiff-appellee had not violated any of defendant-appellant's copyrights and defendant-appellant was not entitled to injunctive relief.

OVERVIEW: The trial court refused to grant defendant-appellant injunctive relief for alleged copyright infringement against plaintiff-appellee, a rival toy company which marketed an enhancement ... defendant-appellant's copyrighted product. Defendant-appellant sought review claiming the trial court erred in ... ducts were not derivative works. The court affirmed the enhancement was not a ... d. The court then looked at several factors of the fair use doctrine including the purpose ...



4 "Play our games the way we say."

Nintendo have an almost obsessive hatred of cheats. To this day, you're more likely to see Donald Rumsfeld in a Mario game than a button code. But Nintendo were diagnosed with lethally acute cheatophobia in 1991, when US firm Galoob released the 'Game Genie' (the first device to let you get cheaty effects by tapping codes into NES games) – and *were actually taken to court* by the big red N.

Nintendo's claim, incredibly, was that the way the Game Genie changed a game's play amounted to copyright infringement. Galoob, who had made unsuccessful attempts in the past to license the Game Genie as an official accessory, slapped Nintendo silly in the courts (on what we actually think is a slightly iffy point that their device only alters the "display" of the game), and the only "victory" for Nintendo was in giving the Game Genie (and the later Action Replay) free marketing in heaped dessert spoonfuls.

> Hello,
>
> We would like to apologize to you and to those who frequent the website for inadvertently contacting you about a fan
> posting on the website.
>
> We know that many of our fans are old enough to make their own choice
> about what they want to view on the Internet. We value the support of
> our fans and we respect their decisions. The letter was sent as part
> of an ongoing Nintendo program to aggressively protect our younger
> consumers from the hundreds of sexually-explicit sites each year that
> use Nintendo properties to attract children. We are proud of our
> efforts in this area. Unfortunately, the site posting identified in
> our letter was targeted by mistake.
>
> As a gesture of goodwill, we would like to offer you (and
>) a free Nintendo video game system and game of your
> choice. If you would like to take Nintendo of America up on this
> offer, please contact the Consumer Services Dept. at 1-800-633-3236
> and the system and game will be sent to your address as listed in the
> WHOIS contact information for .
>
> In addition, we would appreciate it if you could provide us with
> contact information for , or have him contact us
> directly, so that we may apologize to him. We would be glad to send
> him a game and system of his choice through you as well, since we do
> not have his contact information.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Nintendo of America Inc.

> Greetings:
>
...present Nintendo of America Inc. ("Nintendo"), the owner of the ...mark(s) and/or copyrighted works listed above (the "Nintendo ...mark(s)/works"). It has come to our client's attention recently ...you are using the Nintendo trademark(s)/works in the hidden ...visible text/meta tags and/or title and/or links of the ...e-referenced sexually explicit Web site. This use is ...thorized, and we are writing to demand that you immediately cease ...desist this infringement of Nintendo's intellectual property ...ts.

...tendo has acquired substantial rights in the Nintendo ...demark(s)/works. Nintendo's customers--including many children and ...ir parents--have come to identify the Nintendo trademark(s)/works ...th the high quality of Nintendo products. Your unauthorized use of ...e Nintendo trademark(s)/works will tarnish Nintendo's reputation.

...his infringement of Nintendo's intellectual property rights can ...ubject you to sanctions under applicable federal and state laws. ...ccordingly, you must immediately cease and desist from any and all ...se of (1) the Nintendo trademark(s)/works, (2) any other Nintendo ...trademark(s)/works, and (3) any mark which is confusingly similar to a ...Nintendo trademark. This includes, but is not limited to, your ...infringement of Nintendo's intellectual property as explained above.

...I look forward to your immediate confirmation that you have taken the ...necessary steps to resolve this matter. To that end, you may contact ...me at either
>
> Sincerely,

PROFILE | CONTACT

LOOKING FOR: A woman.
FOR: Friendship, Online flirting.
VIEW DATING PROFILE »
...EMBER SINCE: December 2002
...GE: 21 (Feb 10, 1983)
...NDER: Male
...ATION:
...RITE BOOKS: Screw books! Video ...: Ninja Gaiden, Halo, Zelda, Final ... I-VI, Dead or Alive, Mortal Kombat, ...ania, Silent Hill, Earthworm Jim, Mega Man, Unreal, Metroid, Doom, Soul Caliber, Guilty Gear, F-Zero GX, Eternal Darkness, KOTOR, WarCraft

3 "Mention our games and we'll sue you."

All publicity is good publicity? Nah. On an apparent drive to prevent websites with "questionable content" destroying Nintendo's 'kiddie' reputation, the company's team of robolawyers reportedly advised an adult site to cease and desist from infringing Nintendo's copyright. The site's crime? Publishing a page where a member of the site said he liked *Metroid*. After the whole 'net-reading world had been informed that Nintendo's lawfolk were coming down hard, the company apparently apologised and offered the man in question a free console and game. Bet he loved all that attention.

NEW TECH

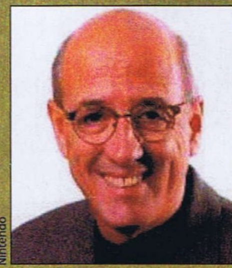
NEW TECH

Nintendo CD: The full story

- Super Nintendo CD cancelled!
- All-new 32-bit machine for '95/'96!

2 "So long, Sony."

A classic tale so packed with irony that you could package it up and sell it as irony cakes. 1990s-era Nintendo asked Sony to make a CD-ROM add-on for the SNES – then, suspicious of Sony's motives, threw the whole thing right back in Sony's face by announcing a similar deal with Philips just as Sony were unveiling the finished product. The result: Nintendo's new-found enemy vowing to avenge their dead son by building an entire console around their core technology. The codename: PlayStation. The rest: history.


Nintendo



1 "We are a family-friendly company."

"Our highest priority is to produce quality games that are both accessible to younger players and acceptable to the whole family." – Peter Main, Vice President of Nintendo, 1993. Next thing you know the cuddly kittens at Nintendo are bringing us *Conker's Bad Fur Day* (a game so mature that Nintendo of Europe refused to release it as a first-party product), tattooed Game Boy Advance SPs, Nintendo DS adverts smothered in Jackass fellas and laugh-out-loud gags ("Bigger isn't always better!"), and Mario punching Yoshi in the face in *Super Smash Bros.* We *really* don't want to meet Peter Main's family.

EXTENDED PLAY

METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

Fancy a belated Christmas present? How about every missile in the game? We spoil you…

You need to be quick on the trigger if you're going to get far in *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*. Along with the puzzle-solving, world-swapping and exploration, there's a wide range of monsters to meet and reduce to piles of jelly. That's if they don't reduce you to mush first – Geraint's language when he faced moth-monster Chykka would've turned the air blue if he hadn't been uttering his obscenities in Welsh (which turned the air green).

Of course, you don't *need* lots of missiles in *Echoes*. Just like you don't need weapon pick-ups in *Mario Kart* or lots of turnips and fruit trees in *Harvest Moon*. It's reassuring to have them, and gives you an edge over the competition, but it's not exactly essential. You do need some for opening red hatches, and they're useful for taking down any particularly nasty bosses you encounter but that's about it. (The aforementioned Chykka is vulnerable to Super Missiles while it's in its larval form.)

Still, when did need come into anything? You *want* all the missiles, you know you do. And that's where this guide can help you out. We've found every single one of them, and we've taken notes on what equipment you need to get at them. Just follow our instructions and you'll get the lot.

Some changes have been made to your ballistic beauties since the last game – for one thing, you can no longer keep pressing Y, A, Y, A to fire missiles constantly like you could in *Prime*. However, now you can charge them up so they'll become more specialised weapons like Darkburst or Sonic Boom missiles, and you've plenty more options besides. There's even one for rapid firing. We'll tell you all about the charges you can apply once we've finished listing where all the missiles are located.

We'll have even more *Echoes* tactics for you next issue, so if you're still stuck on the game even with a plentiful supply of missiles at your fingertips, you know where to come. Just wait for the February issue and another bundle of the game's most useful secrets will be revealed…





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

When a girl's shooting aliens and tackling huge boss-type monsters, there are some things she can't afford to run out of, like missiles. And lipgloss (says Mim), but we're only concerned about the missiles. We'll show you where to find every single one in the game.



WHAT WE SAID IN LAST ISSUE!

As the game progresses you get a gradual feel of empowerment as you become more familiar with your weapons, skills and the growing environment – and your pride swells as you overcome the game's tougher mental challenges.

NGC 94



Find all the missiles in METROID PRIME 2: ECHOES





1 Location: Temple Grounds, GFMC Compound
You need: Charge beam
To get it: This one's no trouble – just shoot a charged beam shot at the yellow federation container to your left to reveal the missile launcher.



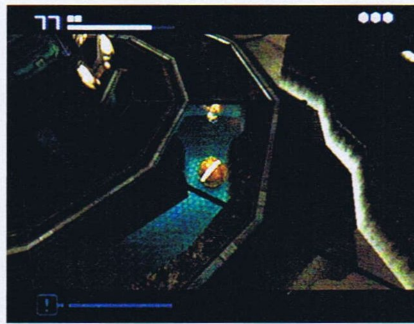
2 Location: Temple Grounds, Transport to Agon Wastes
You need: Power beam
To get it: When you enter the room, go forward to the lift and then turn around. To your right is some webbing. Shoot the centre to get access to the missiles.



3 Location: Agon Wastes, Portal Access A
You need: Morph ball
To get it: When you land on the other side of the room, turn around and behind the dead Luminoth is the missile expansion. Morph and carefully roll to collect the missile.



4 Location: Agon Wastes, Transport Center
You need: Space jump, Morph ball bombs
To get it: Once you have the Space Jump boots, head back into Light World and go to the newly accessible door in the portal room. Activate the bomb slot to claim the missiles.



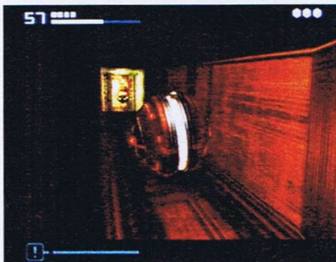
5 Location: Agon Wastes, Command Center
You need: Morph ball
To get it: Pass the first two morph ball passage lasers, and take a right before the third. Go past the next laser to collect the missile near it.



6 Location: Agon Wastes, Sand Cache
You need: Amber translator
To get it: Scan the Amber Luminoth door and then enter the room to claim your missiles.



7 Location: Temple Grounds, Temple Assembly Site
You need: Space jump
To get it: Go to the top-left area of the room and you'll see a small brown statue below a ledge with some crates on it. Space Jump onto the statue, then go to the ledge. Go left and morph into the tunnel to collect the missiles.



8 Location: Great Temple, Transport B Access
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: In the middle of the room to your left (if you came from Temple grounds), you should spot a morph ball section cut into the wall. Bomb jump up a few times and simply keep rolling until you collect the missiles.



9 Location: Torvus Bog, Forgotten Bridge
You need: n/a
To get it: Activate the bomb slot in Dark Aether's version of the area, then return to Light Aether and walk across the bridge to the now-accessible missiles.



10 Location: Torvus Bog, Underground Tunnel
You need: Morph ball
To get it: As soon as you enter the room from the Torvus Temple side fall into the water, morph and roll behind you. Follow the path to collect the missiles.



12 Location: Temple Grounds, Hive Chamber A
You need: n/a
To get it: Move forward to face the Dark Missile Trooper. Simply charge a full dark beam blast, freeze it and missile it to claim your missiles.



11 Location: Temple Grounds, Hall of Honoured Dead
You need: Boost ball
To get it: Solve the spinner puzzle by boosting in each spinner, making each ringlet light up (which shows it's in the correct spot). Boost in the purple spinner to light up the outer ring, then boost in the blue spinner to light up the next two rings, then the yellow spinner for two more rings and finally the red spinner to light up the middle ring. Collect the Seeker missiles.



13 Location: Temple Grounds, Hive Chamber B
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: Look for the morph ball entry with the cracked covering. Blow it up with a morph ball bomb, roll in and collect your missiles.



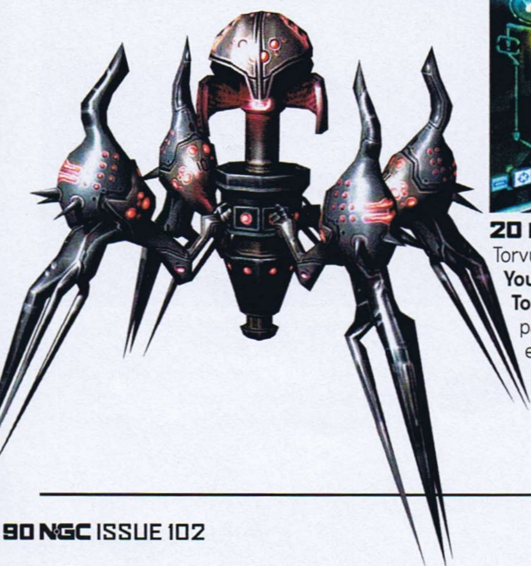
14 Location: Dark Agon Wastes, Crossroads
You need: Boost ball
To get it: In Transport Chamber, boost up the half pipe to the very top to the portal. Activate it and you'll appear with the missiles right in front of you.



15 Location: Torvus Bog, Hydrodynamo Station
You need: Space jump boots
To get it: Once you've activated the first bridge and used the booster to get back to the top of the room, fall down to the purple Seeker door, where the missiles are sitting.



16 Location: Dark Torvus Bog, Undertransit One
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: On the bottom level head to the Crypt, on the right-hand side of the bottom level bomb jump up and left and then move left. Bomb jump to the right to collect the well-concealed missiles.





17 Location: Torvus Bog, Abandoned Work Site
You need: Grapple beam
To get it: From the water just after the Light door, turn around and look up to face the grapple point. Space jump up and to it and latch onto the grapple point. Swing across to grab the missiles.



18 Location: Torvus Bog, Portal Chamber
You need: Space jump
To get it: It's in Dark Torvus Bog's version of the room. Make your way to the end of the room, unmorph and look up behind you. Space Jump up the two ledges and morph. Fall out and activate the Light portal. Collect the missiles and use the Dark transporter to go back to Dark Aether afterwards.



19 Location: Torvus Bogs, Path of Roots
You need: Grapple beam
To get it: Simply grapple over to the missiles on the ledge.



20 Location: Torvus Bogs, Torvus Lagoon
You need: Gravity boost
To get it: Take the right-hand path underwater (towards the elevator) and you'll approach a high ledge with venomweed below. Simply use the boost to get to the missiles.



21 Location: Great Temple, Transport A Access
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: To the right of the save station are some rocks. Bomb them and roll down the ramp to collect the missiles.



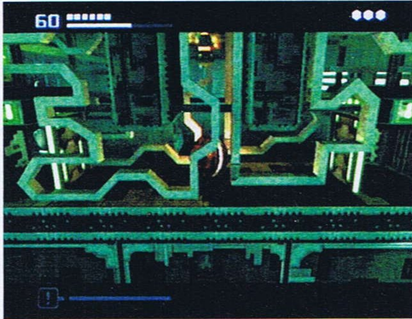
24 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Dynamo Works
You need: Spider ball
To get it: Once you've beaten the Spider ball boss, go to the exit by spiderballing to the top left corner of the arena and bomb jump up the gap and go left. The missile is just in front of the exit.



22 Location: Great Temple, GFMC Compound
You need: Space jump (Or Screw attack)
To get it: You can go to the entrance of the morph ball tunnel by the powerbomb door and do a long space jump from the corner to the top of the federation ship. The missile is located at the back of the ship on the roof. Using Screw Attack makes the jump easier, but it's not essential.



23 Location: Ing Hive, Hazing Cliff
You need: Light beam
To get it: Use a single charged Light beam shot on each of the Dark Diligence Drones to kill them. You can now collect the missiles.

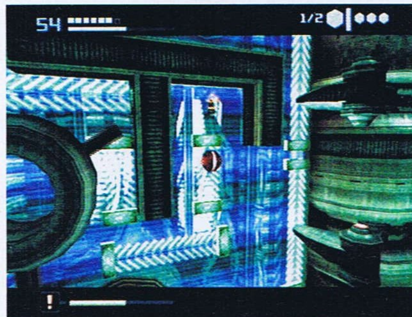


25 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Hall of Combat Mastery
You need: Spider ball, Morph ball bombs
To get it: Go to the tip of the west wall and look for the spider ball track. Go through the spider ball obstacle course by going into the morph ball slot to reverse the conveyor belt, then going past the flame jets (be careful at the moving laser bars). Move slowly with them and only bomb jump when you have the chance. Next up are horizontal lasers on timers. Bomb jump carefully onto the moving platforms and continue left. Be careful of the Phazon in this part.

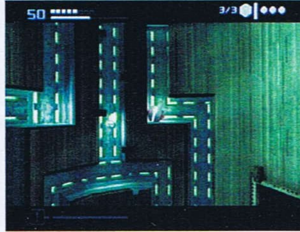
Bomb jump onto the moving platform and when the magnetic bar passes overhead, hold R and bomb jump to it. Drop onto the other platform once over it and bomb jump to the spider track. Go right and spider ball over to the missile expansion.



26 Location: Torvus Bog, Training Chamber
You need: Spider ball
To get it: Use the spider ball track underwater just to the left of the statue to boost across and up to the roof. Drop down, bomb the slot and the missiles are behind the statue.



27 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Main research
You need: Spider ball
To get it: The left-hand wall has a spider ball track starting at the bottom. Carefully work your way around the track, avoiding the pincers. At the end is a set of missiles.



28 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Central Area Transport West
You need: Morph ball
To get it: From the top, drop down to the lift and look down at the corner. You should see three slots. Morph and roll into the left hole, then go right and right again to fall onto the missiles.



29 Location: Ing Hive, Aerial Training Site
You need: Screw attack
To get it: In front and to the sides of the Light portal are wall jump surfaces. Simply wall jump up to the missiles.



30 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Sentinels Path
You need: Annihilator beam, Echo visor
To get it: Equip the Echo visor and use the Annihilator beam on the Echo door. Shoot the key on the right twice, then the key on the left once, then the key on the right once more. This will open the door to the missiles.





31 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Temple Access
You need: Echo visor, Seeker missiles
To get it: Use your Seeker missiles on the four targets above the door leading to the temple. This will create a morph ball cannon silhouette. Now, go to the front of the main object in the room and switch on your Echo visor. Shoot the sonar device and then quickly jump into the morph ball cannon. Collect the missiles and use the spinner to create a gap.



33 Location: Agon Wastes, Main Reactor
You need: Spider ball, Boost ball
To get it: To the right of the spider ball tracks opposite the lift is another spider ball track. Go up this and then boost your way over from moving pillar to pillar. At the end of this is the next set of missiles – set a bomb to blow the glass casing covering them.



32 Location: Agon Wastes, Ventilation Shaft A
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: When you get to the junction that allows you to go upward, go right to the next mound. It has a tunnel leading away up above it. Do two sets of double bomb jumps to the left and then do a single bomb jump over to the missiles.



34 Location: Agon Wastes, Sandprocessing
You need: Boost ball
To get it: Kill the turrets and then boost up the half pipe to the tunnel. Bomb jump in and then use the bomb slot to drain the sand from the area, revealing the missiles.



35 Location: Agon Wastes, Storage C
You need: Screw attack, Super missiles
To get it: Raise the middle platforms and then go to the highest one. Screw Attack over to the ledge and blow the door open with a Super missile.



36 Location: Agon Wastes, Storage B
You need: Dark beam
To get it: On the upper floor; use your Dark beam to open up the door.



37 Location: Agon Wastes, Storage A
You need: Power bombs, Light beam
To get it: Break the denzium rubble in the corner and open the Light door to claim your missiles.



38 Location: Agon Wastes, Mining Station A
You need: Power bombs, Spider ball
To get it: Blow up the denzium with a power bomb and roll into the cannon. Latch onto the track with your spider ball and then work your way to the missiles on the left.



39 Location: Dark Agon Wastes, Warrior's Walk
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: Bomb the middle flooring above the Phazon pool. Boost into the missile as the Phazon will damage Samus severely.



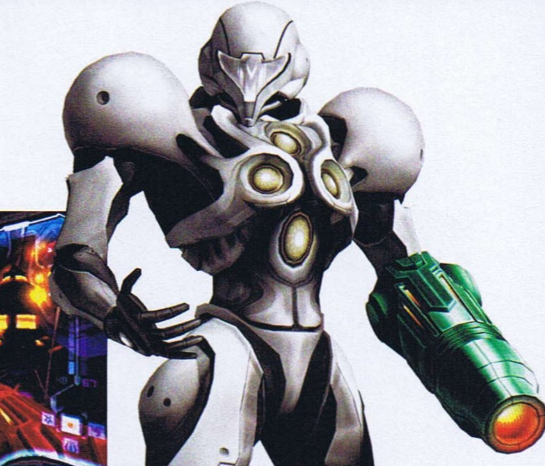
40 Location: Dark Agon Wastes, Junction Site
You need: Spider ball
To get it: Bomb Jump onto the spider ball track. Bomb the bomb slot and drop onto the missiles.

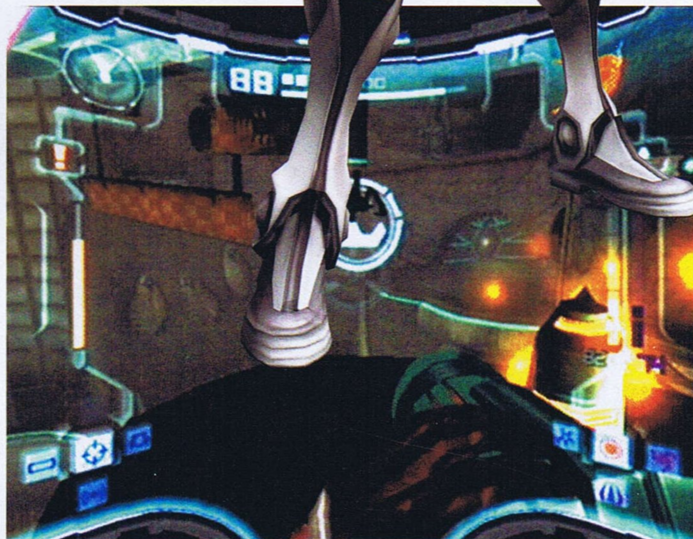


41 Where: Dark Agon Wastes, Ing Cache 4
You need: Dark beam
To get it: Open the door with the Dark beam, drop down, morph and roll into the tunnel that doubles back towards the door.



42 Location: Dark Torvus Bog, Undertemple
You need: Screw attack
To get it: Go to the section with the spider ball tracks that lead up to the portal. On the walls are wall jump pads. Wall jump up these to grab the missiles at the top.





43 Location: Torvus Bog, Gathering Hall
You need: Powerbombs, Spider ball
To get it: Powerbomb the case under the water and then powerbomb the middle section that's left. Boost up the newly made half-pipe and latch onto the spider track. Go round and boost onto the rotating spiderblock. Boost into the bomb slot and bomb it. Repeat this for the other side. This will unlock the missiles.



44 Where: Torvus Bog, Torvus Grove
You need: Powerbombs
To get it: Find the two thick distorted tree legs and Powerbomb them both. The tree will collapse, revealing the missiles to you.



45 Location: Torvus Bog, Plaza Access
You need: Morph ball bombs
To get it: Use Bomb Jumps to navigate your way to two bomb slots. Activate each so you can access a new part of the area, and use another Bomb Jump to reach the tunnel atop the second ledge. Now roll down this new area and use the half-pipe to boost over to the missiles.



46 Location: Temple Grounds, Phazon Grounds
You need: Screw Attack or Dark visor
To get it: You can either use your Dark visor to spot the invisible platforms, or take the safer option later on in the game and use the Screw Attack to get across to the missiles, while killing all Metroids in your way.



47 Location: Temple Grounds, War Ritual Grounds
You need: Dark visor, Seeker missiles
To get it: Switch on your Dark visor and use your Seeker missiles to trigger the five locks to open up the room to the missiles.



48 Location: Torvus Bog, Transit Tunnel South
You need: Annihilator beam, Morph ball bombs
To get it: First activate the bottom-most bomb slot, then jump up so you're above the yellow orb. Double Bomb Jump up and go right to reach another bomb slot. Activate it and use Bomb Jumps and the water current to reach the missiles.



49 Location: Temple Grounds, Communication
You need: Space Jump, Morph ball bombs
To get it: Space Jump onto the middle section and lay a bomb over the glass casing to expose the missiles.



50 Location: Sky Temple Grounds, Plain of Dark Worship
You need: Light beam
To get it: Go into the Dark portal and trek across the vast plain to the Ingworm hive at the end of the area. Once you're there, grab the Expansion just inside an alcove.



51 Location: Sanctuary Fortress, Sanctuary Map Station
You need: Light suit
To get it: Step into the beam of light to be transported to the room that contains the missiles.



MISSILE UPGRADES
Missiles – now with added kaboom!



DARKBURST
Location: Argon Wastes, Mining Station B
You need: Seeker missiles
To get it: Open the Seeker door. Note the suspended blade. Go right to the half-pipe. Scan the switch for a morph ball cannon. Activate the bomb slot by the Luminoth. Boost back to the half-pipe, jump in the cannon, and bomb the bomb slot. Jump on the half-pipe and boost up, reaching the blade from above. Activate the Dark portal. Visit more rooms to activate a Light portal, then return for the Darkburst.



SUNBURST
Location: Torvus Bog, Grand Windchamber
You need: Grapple beam
To get it: Start from the far side and switch to Dark Torvus. Use the spinners to make the dots on the metal rings on the center platform rotate to face the wall/portal. Each ring that faces this way should light up. Next, switch back to Light Torvus and grapple your way over to the morph ball cannon. Roll in the cannon to collect the Sunburst.



SONIC BOOM
Location: Dark Argon Wastes, Phazon Site
You need: Annihilator beam, Dark visor
To get it: Use your Dark visor to locate the hidden moving platforms within the area. Go to the middle platform and when it's at its peak, Screw Attack over to the door. Use your Annihilator beam on the door to claim the Sonic Boom.

NEXT MONTH
How to get all the other items – energy tanks, Light and Dark ammo expansion and more – plus secret techniques and sequence breaking!

NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
YOU NEED!

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



PAPER MARIO THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR

UNLOCKABLE GAMES

Complete Toodle's book side-mission to unlock the Boat game.

Complete Pine T Junior's dad-rescuing side-mission to unlock the Paper game.

Complete Koopkook's hide-and-seek side-mission to unlock the Plane game.

Finally, perform the Important Task for Frankie to unlock the Tube game.

MS MOWZ ON YOUR TEAM

Find the secret badge in Hooktail the Dragon's castle to complete the problem at the Trouble centre. Go to the top of Zess-T's shop and give the badge to the mouse, and she will join your band of adventurers.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2

GET THE GAPS

Here are your rewards for getting all the gaps in the game:

Always Special
Bigfoot One
Boxer
Flute Player
Guitar Player
Lost Soul 3
Lounge Singer
Moon Gravity
Paramedic
Perfect Manual
Perfect Rail
Perfect Skitch
Security Guard
Skaboto
Space Monkey 3
Tiki Mask
Wiener Vendor

THE INCREDIBLES

INFINITE INCREDI-POWER

Enter the code FLEXIBLE to get infinite Incredi-power for oh-so-flexible Elastigirl and use SHOWTIME to get infinite Incredi-power for Mr Incredible.





TERMINATOR 3: THE REDEMPTION

CODES

Go to the main menu and then input the following codes during the Credits movie.

All upgrades	X + Y + L
All levels	X + Z + Y
Invincibility	X + Z + R

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

If there's a competition coming up in Animal Crossing – like the fishing one – just keep hold of any suitable items, like Large Bass, in your bag on the days leading up to it. Then you can enter straight away.
Jack Gribbins, Devon

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005

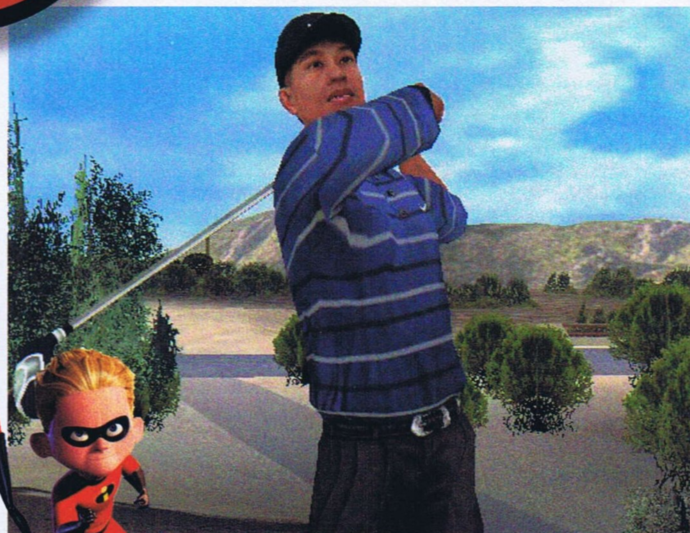
PASSWORDS

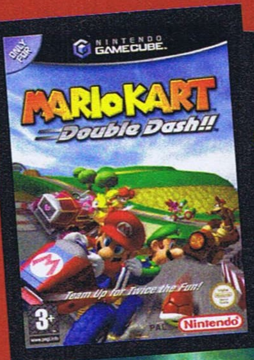
Enter the following codes at the password screen.

All accessories	TIGERMOBILE
All courses	THEWORLDISYOURS
All courses /golfers	THEGIANTOYSTER
All in skill section	NIGHTGOLFER



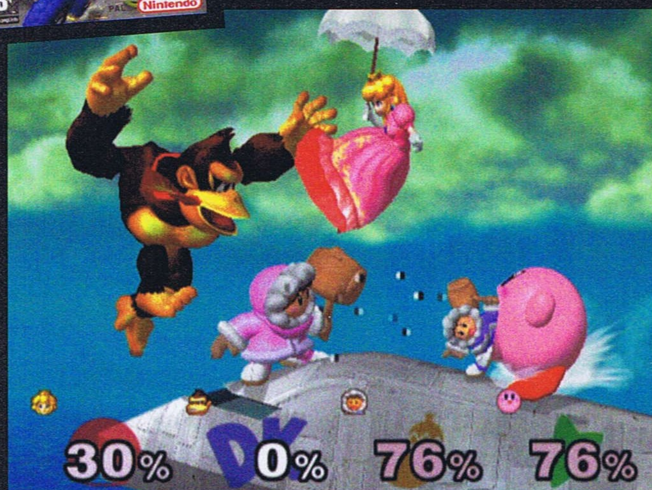
All password items	TIGERMOBILE
All Adidas items	91treSTR
All Calloway items	cgTR78qw
All Cleveland items	CL45etUB
All Maxfli items	FDGH597i
All Nike items	YJHk342B
All Odyssey items	kjnMR3qv
All Ping items	R453DrTe
All Precept items	BRi3498Z
All Tag items	cDsa2fgY
All TourStage items	TS345329
"Sunday" Tiger Woods	NEWLEGEND
Adriana Dolce	SOSWEET
Alastair McFadden	NICESOCKS
Aphrodite Papadapolus	TEMPTING
Arnold Palmer	THEKING
Ben Hogan	PUREGOLF or THEHAWK
Bev Bouchier	THEBEEHIVE
Billy Hightower	TOOTALL
Bunjiro Tanaka	INTHEFAMILY
Caesar Rosado	LANDOWNER
Dion Douglas	DDDOUGLAS
Gary Player	BLACKKNIGHT
Hunter Elmore	GREENCOLLAR
Jack Nicklaus	GOLDENBEAR
Jeb McGraw	SIXSHOOTER
Justin Timberlake	THETENNESSEKID or ALTEREGO
Kendra Lovette	ENGLISHPUNK
Raquel Rockers	DOUBLER
Reginald Withers	REGGIE
Seve Ballesteros	THEMAGICIAN
Tiffany "Tiff" Williams	RICHGIRL





READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a mystery prize from Geraint's 'special drawer'. Chances are, it'll be a game.



1. SUPER SMASH BROS

Jigglytough

If you're playing as Jigglypuff on the Hyrule Temple stage, this trick could come in very useful. When you're about to fall off the furthest-right platform, hit Left + B repeatedly to pound to the left and this will take you onto the lower platform so you're still in the game.
Josh Young, Preston

2. BURNOUT 2
Gold standard
If you're near the end of a race in Championship mode and you know you can't win, turn the Gamecube off and then on again. The game saves at the start of each race, so you can try again without having to restart the championship.
Nick Hawkins, Harlow

3. MARIO KART: DD
Ooh baby baby!
Just before the hairpin turns on Baby Park there are several bushes. If you start your powerslide just as you get to the third bush from the end and push the c-stick to the top-right you'll get round the bend really quickly.
Michael Yeomans, Guildford

4. SUPER SMASH BROS.
C for yourself
In the middle of a multiplayer battle, use the C-stick to launch a fully powered smash attack without building your attacking power up.
Richard Eagle, Orpington

5. ZELDA: OOT
Going, going, gong
After entering the lost woods in Kokiri Village, turn right. There is a small gong there. As Child Link, hit three bull's eyes in a row and a Deku shrub will appear and give you the medium bullet seed bag.
Anonymous

6. TONY HAWK'S PS 3
Because they ARRRRRR!
Go to the Skater Island level, then find the flags standing side-by-side and grind the Jolly Roger (that's the one with the skull and crossbones on). Two doors will blow up, giving you access to a pirate ship.
Justin Graham, Co Antrim

7. METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM
Beat friends and influence people
Find every single secret and speed chip in the game to unlock the skyscraper-sized General Corrosive for the multiplayer Coliseum map. Let the stomping commence!
Jeff Calhoun, Dumfries

8. WARIO WARE INC
Through the keyhole
There *is* something behind the final door in single-player mode – just get a rose on every minigame in Practice mode. The reward is a new mode: non-stop minigames till the weird space-cat comes home.
Claire Higgins, Colchester

9. SKIES OF ARCADIA
Artful dodging
Once you've got the upgrade that lets you fly at high or low altitude, you can avoid the random battles. Of course, if you avoid all battles you'll be too weak for boss fights, so try to achieve a balance.
Ed Kamau, London

10. RESIDENT EVIL 0
Leech hunting
Finish the game on Easy, Normal or Hard to unlock the leech hunter minigame. The more leeches you catch, the better the extra abilities unlocked in the main game.
William Thompson, Margate





See the doctor if you're sick. He's really twisted.

Dr Kitts,
I've heard that, in *Super Monkey Ball*, if you complete all 50 levels in Expert mode without a single Fallout, then you open Master mode. I've managed to complete Beginner and Advanced stages without a single Fallout, but I can't for the life of me get through all 50 Expert Stages without Fallouts, it's almost impossible! I can't find anything out about Master mode anywhere, other than the fact it exists, and it's driving me crazy! Have you ever managed to unlock Master mode, and what exactly is it?
David Hurrell, Swindon

Dr Kitts masters all…
Master mode is, as you've probably guessed, a stage of 10 levels even more tricky than the Expert ones. You have to beat all the Expert and Extra Expert levels without a single fallout to unlock them. You're just going to have to keep playing Practice mode in order to perfect the Expert levels you're having trouble with. It really is the only way. You'll just have to live with the frustration until you can do it.

Dr Kitts,
In *Eternal Darkness*, I'm on Michael Edwards chapter and I can't find the detonator to the C4 bomb. I've looked everywhere! Please help, I've been stuck on this part for months.
Daniel Jennings, Derbyshire

Dr Kitts has a big bang theory…
Okay, I'm assuming that you've already got the explosives. Return to the room where the obelisk was before you teleported it elsewhere. At the end of the room, use a Seven-Point Reveal Invisible with a Dominant alignment to reveal a door – you should remember it being here back when Roberto was here. Behind it, the detonators are on the floor near a dead bloke. Mix the explosives and detonators to create a working C4 bomb.

Dr Kitts,
In *Starwing* (if you can remember that far back), how do I unlock the "black hole" level that I can see on map screen?
Greg O'Brien, via email

Do not mock the razor-sharp memory of Dr Kitts…
About halfway through the asteroid belt level you'll see a group of asteroids with an orangy asteroid in the centre. Shoot the orangy one and fly through the space it leaves. Repeat with two more of these asteroid formations, then shoot the laughing asteroid that appears.

CODE BANK

Codes for your Action Replay

PAPER MARIO THE THOUSAND YEAR DOOR

Master code
FDF3-F69A-61Y4T
PP41-ZY0P-KC7QJ

MARIO CODES
Y6Y4-RRFR-UMH6Y

Infinite/Max Health
NFBY-G9HP-C9QDT
G2P3-PJWH-CMJAG
6MQD-GFPU-RQAWU
JG6R-K5DR-GZQUJ
EGPX-WB31-81XMF

Max Health
6GQ1-EHAE-W12BM
G2P3-PJWH-CMJAG
5XD3-H3T0-97RUR
JG6R-K5DR-GZQUJ

Float Jump (Hold R)
2M23-XEK7-8WKK1
X8MA-2ARF-XDN0M
69E1-4W11-8TY5F

GOOMBELLA CODES
AT77-HV30-K8YRE

Infinite/Max Health
6M6F-X3EC-8UM80
B6XF-4H8M-ZFY3Y
NBAY-AB6N-ZYNJJ
3J7F-NG2W-8118K
EUAQ-T1PT-62D0M

Max Health
6CWV-21TH-MZNYX
B6XF-4H8M-ZFY3Y
MWC9-GNDM-9W7U7
EUAQ-T1PT-62D0M

ITEM IN SLOT 1
QDCV-EJU6-BX22V

Thunder Bolt
1CWQ-DM2Q-7WXGP
YNE3-E5EQ-JAQH9

Thunder Rage
E0Z8-74GE-KYANE
9AHX-CM0C-Y6RJF

Shooting Star
2TG4-MZTD-C0RJT
J2KM-FWAX-2KN5V

Ice Storm
Y4FF-EX5T-G43V4
Y75U-GRTU-EPPTT

Fire Flower
5725-4VQV-H93DX
24MG-6W40-X7W61

Earth Quake
NBGU-0A7B-HUNXY
0NG1-YYER-P2ENM

Boo's Sheet
G3GX-GB38-UVTDF
AT75-C4K5-6A21Q

Volt Shroom
M6KP-VF3W-T702V
GF8B-HXC2-BT12C

Repel Cape
GP2C-17BR-WGA8K
WMZ0-DCN2-2EM0Z

Ruin Powder
X6ZJ-J6C9-GBQNM
F9EU-7FJU-MD4CF

Sleepy Sheep
T1VR-12UF-A9R45
C12K-P16R-QZ8XG

POW Block
XFM6-CR99-UP4Z6
5EDN-83C2-XCM2V

Dizzy Dial
UHWX-3U6H-01KE3
X99D-C16X-B5ZR6

Power Punch
7HMZ-WKYR-DXMT9
N46E-6G3A-U4HRR

Courage Shell
1X0J-CFHC-6YJAK
NA4C-R1ZP-EZ8N8

Mini Mr. Mini
VYNP-FNUW-K8ACE
TXTE-XGVA-NG9K7

Mr Softener
8NV5-V51C-2YM72
F1RG-CPX1-811MU

Mushroom
39NM-M54T-3BFTN
C7EH-PKGJ-CWAWT

Super Shroom
8FD0-J03C-HA7M8
0XHF-UCFU-QDC7J

Ultra Shroom
BM87-6N7R-JHPRY
5FD9-NQ0J-Q2J5U

Life Shrrom
C7T5-453Y-NQG7Y
0TM8-10X0-XZC0M

Dried Shroom
GCRH-488F-R5MWU
G6X1-6V93-U3DDE

Honey Syrup
0CUB-N6FQ-ZGP2T
MF9W-CT7G-QHBDQ

Maple Syrup
DKV2-X64B-2RYAX
3B2G-2M48-EM8ZE

Jammin' Jelly
8XWP-E2BX-FR68G
DDJP-4B8A-TH1U7

Slow Shroom
ZJET-ENQ0-G971C
NJ8C-GG8N-8EMFV

Gradual Syrup
YRWU-YK0T-AYWTJ
XREY-VNEM-H8TXD

ITEM IN SLOT 2
26WK-MK3P-36R0D

Thunder Bolt
XCDQ-D8KD-30N9C
EFGY-JZ5X-Y94AA

Thunder Rage
33MK-YV24-9GD92
KP8R-26DQ-160KB

Shooting Star
99ZE-A6DF-TVR8P
UW1V-7TPA-4ZXXY

Ice Storm
M27R-X0UV-DBJTX
CZB4-51RD-EERPF

Fire Flower
K7V6-PDVP-N6G7X
A2MU-R1MK-RW9K6

Earth Quake
XU7R-FK3A-64EA1
K0MN-QYPF-8PK28

Boo's Sheet
CXT0-D6A9-1KX1D
Y7ZD-B8RF-2PCP6

Volt Shroom
59HJ-QKN4-4RVNZ
T9UF-RTKB-TDBKN

Repel Cape
KYH3-HZ27-DQDWW
Z5JZ-GVBP-AGYXF

Ruin Powder
PQ35-A1K2-EQMT5
JNH9-D1K8-YT3AA

Sleepy Sheep
FZ9X-D750-6AZJA
MVWQ-80MF-H33NT

POW Block
MQRK-KV7V-CEJQ5
2WE9-45AF-Q7ZYC

Dizzy Dial
NKWH-UGZK-TQBDA
KV4X-1J15-BYRAG

Power Punch
YA6R-HNAT-78BD3
B42H-ZF34-XFW2W

Courage Shell
UD3Q-EDZ3-6X403
1C1R-17VH-B46TB

Mini Mr. Mini
JZVF-A1T1-45Z11
WV57-48P2-JN18N

Mr Softener
02DX-906K-U45XE
XXVA-YFRR-79BY6

Mushroom
EGWW-0G9B-EMMKC
MFK8-083M-BQNEM

Super Shroom
HZ97-DPKA-HX6TV
8WAK-DXMU-HKR2W

Ultra Shroom
X8CC-C04C-T9PWW
DVP3-GUGY-5QWMY

Life Shrrom
XWKY-8RZK-61PXD
6FPH-JA81-AM1HR

Dried Shroom
W7Y7-EX64-V4NWQ
CQRV-GV37-3G7ED

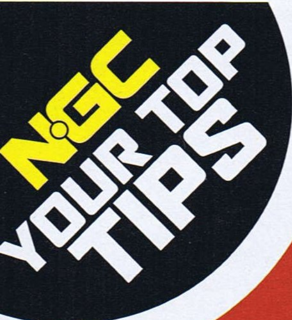
Honey Syrup
12ZW-39E8-PKY9Y
987C-864E-G0J74

Maple Syrup
UE6P-XJQ2-K5GE1
KCF5-JEMB-5Q87W

Jammin' Jelly
RFEN-AQPA-QX96W
C1HG-9BUT-RTB8V

Slow Shroom
139T-4KAH-5TZX3
TD9X-PZG6-X1RT7

Gradual Syrup
6CVQ-K7MN-XAKM3
QMKX-HUAK-2EC26



YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a cool prize. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net…

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ....

Address ....

Postcode ....

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.

LIKE





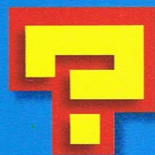












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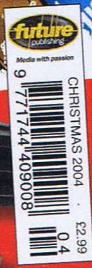
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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES Poster & Game inside!





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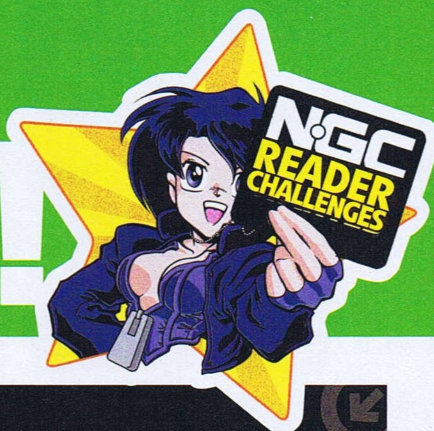
free DVD VIDEO™

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HEY! IT'S THE CONTINUATION OF…

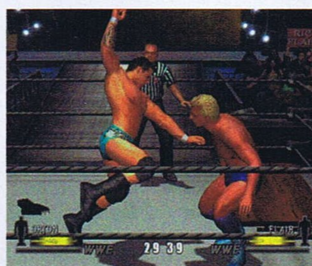
GAME ON!



Did you get something nice from Father Christmas? Something silvery and shiny to put in your Gamecube? Or just a lump of coal like Geraint got? If you got a game, show the festive codger some appreciation and make it last a little bit longer by making new challenges for it. Send your ideas to Game On, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. The best one each issue gets a lovely new Gamecube game. Not coal. No.

WWE DAY OF RECKONING







ROYAL RUMBLE

Stuart Hooper,
Essex

Roll up, roll up, for some frenzied grappling and grunting with the WWE's finest greasy fighting men. It's survival of the toughest for this challenge – and no girls allowed! You have to **begin by setting the difficulty to Expert, then start a 30-man Battle Royal, with no female participants.** You must be one of the two starting competitors, so no coming in halfway through when your opponent's worn out.

There's one more limitation: you can use a maximum of five Specials in the fight, so keep count. And that's it – just see how many WWE superstars you can defeat during the Battle Royal. The more you're able to beat, the better your overall medal will be.

MEN BEATEN  **26-30**  **11-25**  **0-10**

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH







HAIR TODAY

Hannah Shackleton,
Colne

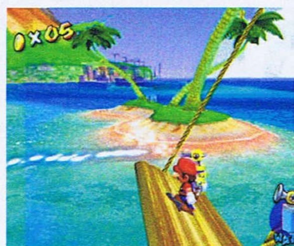
This one, Hannah tells us, applies only to gamers with long hair or Paul. (She's clearly worked out that Paul has yet to achieve the giddy heights of Gamer status.)

Anyway, **put as much of your hair in front of your eyes as possible without completely blinding yourself, then start playing *Mario Kart's* All Cup mode.** To find out what medal you deserve, just see how far you can get…

The scoring system may seem a bit harsh, but we're assured that if you have enough hair you can blot out the blight that is Birdo, which should be incentive enough for anyone. We like this challenge because it makes Paul look *even more* like a muppet than normal.

HOW FAR DID YOU GET  **WON ALL CUP MODE**  **ACTUALLY TRIED IT**  **READ THIS**

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE





KICK IT IN



Jack Radcliffe, Whitchurch

A variation on kicking the durian, this – it's a fun fruit to play with. However, the twist is that this minigame involves the police station. **Start by using your turbo to break open the police station doors but don't go inside. Now see how many kicks it takes to get the durian from the arch by the durian stand through the police station doors.** More than five, and you don't get a medal at all!

KICKS  1  2-3  4-5

FREEDOM FIGHTERS





PLAY NICE



Rob Turpin, Aldershot

Easy. What's the point of it? We want challenges, not the ability to run through nuclear explosions unscathed and kill enemies with a single blow. However, that's what you get in *Freedom Fighters'* easiest mode, which allows you to run through the game with the minimum of Soviet skulls needing smacking. It's so easy, in fact, that Ben has come up with the following challenge: **see how few times you can die on a run-through of the game on Easy difficulty, without firing a single shot** (unless the story dictates otherwise, of course). Medal qualifications below…

 1-3  4+

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN…



Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in…


PIKMIN 2


PAPER MARIO


GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT


METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

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EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your *name and address* so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!



STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a shiny new game from our stack of shiny new games – it's pot luck. Which one will you receive?



'Jigging'

With the current sucess of *Donkey Konga*, I figure Nintendo should take this groundbreaking idea further. I think the next step should be a combination of the DK bongos and a dance mat. My working title is *Super Mario Busker Bros* and the game would revolve around a simulated crowd, which you must impress with your busking skills.

Gameplay is a mixture of your bongo playing ability combined with your jigging capabilities, as measured by the dance mat. Multiplayer features include competitions to gain the most coins or gather the largest crowds. Minigames include seeing how long you can carry on busking while evading arrest for a public disturbance and busking while dodging thrown items.

You can pick from a variety of stages to busk in, including the London Underground, Oxford High Street, the park, outside the chip shop and many more besides! Later there will be an expansion pack allowing you to replace the bongos with a ukelele, banjo or one of those accordian things.

Please let me know what you think of my idea. I believe there has never been a better time to play games which involve pretending to have musical talent, and incoporate jigging.

Matt Brown, Carterton

I like the sound of that. Maybe you could make a tin whistle attachment, for playing a pitiful rendition of Greensleeves, and a plastic dog which growls at the audience while you shuffle on the spot until you wee in your pants. Ed



'Small pistol'

I have to admit I never really got into *Resident Evil 1* on Gamecube. This was mainly because I was expecting a cool shooting-zombies-with-shotguns game, and instead got a rather tedious game where saves were collected, ammo was in short supply and the puzzles were unnecessarily difficult. Because of this I haven't really got excited about *Resident Evil 4* yet.

However when I read your preview in **NGC**/100 I was beginning to get my hopes up, after all it is clearly a game you are looking forward to a hell of a lot. I was particularly interested by the idea of having packs of villagers to gun down. But when I came across the Under Pressure section of the preview my worst fears about what is turning into the new reason to own a Gamecube had been confirmed: "The overriding feeling… is one of tension, pressure and panic." I can accept that sometimes this kind of tension is good fun, but the problem is that if I'm standing in front of a zombie that takes five or six shots to kill, armed with a small pistol, I haven't saved for an hour and I then run out of ammo, I will shortly hear the click of my Gamecube being turned off and the sound of my controller being thrown across my room against a solid wall. I'm sure you can achieve tension without limiting ammo and saves, and after *Eternal Darkness* I'm sure you can have a fun, tense game as well, so why not sort some of this out?

Daniel Cohen, London

Resi 4 doesn't have much in common with the previous games, and you can now save as many times as you like. Mind you, that doesn't solve the problem of inadvertently soiling yourself while you play. Ed

Bonus Letters

Show how much I enjoy the blob.
Daniel Roberts, Abington
You're all about the blob. Ed

Why can I not recall Steve Jalim (at all)? Did he even contribute anything?
Tony Pang, Orpington
He contributed nervous energy and a couple of bags of Haribo Tangfastic sweets. Ed

I have enjoyed your magazine greatly in the past, however last issue contained such a travesty as to make me physically retch.
Stuart Fryd, Stoke Newington
We aim to please. Ed

That was a rubbish poem. You know that. We all know that.
Alex Maunder, via email
At least it rhymed. Ed

The bongos have inspired me to design my own Gamecube accessory. Here it goes, don't laugh: NIN-CHUCKS! They're wireless nun-chuck controllers! (padded, of course).
Ashley Bernard, Wolverhampton
How very Nintendo. Ed

You've made me who I am today, and no one could've done a better job.
Vincent Kenny, via email
So you're a foul-mouthed, Aqua-loving serial killer? Excellent. Ed

'Poor plebs'

Why do you always tell us poor plebs to buy a game as if we're multi-millionaires? I was looking through your mags and the total cost for all games scoring 80 or over on the day of release plus a Gamecube on its launch day would be in the region of £3,310.

As well as DVDs, CDs and other stuff we simply don't have the money for all of them. And those 79 games add up to 3,160 hours (if each game takes 40 hours to finish) or 263 weeks, if someone plays 12 hours a week. And I haven't even started with GBA games.

I bet you get all those games free, or don't spend a penny on any other form of entertainment or social event.

Dominic Egan, Leigh on Sea

Actually, Geraint has his private sheep theme park to support, but still manages to spend the other half of his waking life playing impenetrable Japanese RPGs. Ed

'Sceptical'

Why should the games we buy be so bad in a few weeks/months time? For instance: *Metroid Prime*, *Mario Sunshine* and *Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life*. 'Another mind-numbingly dull piece of silicon tedium.' That just about describes *Harvest Moon* for me.

Most of the people who bought these games have probably (and hopefully) been wholly satisfied. But the remaining 20% of us, like

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to): David Hall, Crawley; Josh Wilkie, Paisley; Håvard Karlsen, Norway; Dave Varley, Llandudno; Jake Madeley, Crewe; Shailen Laxman, Fleet; Hugh Howlett, Cheltenham; Rob Norton, Harrogate; Josiah Mainwaring, via email; Stuart Bartlett, via email; Matthew Duffell, Chorley; Ashley Bernard; Wolverhampton; Mathew Williams, Swansea; Antony Dewar, Nico Binns, London; Walton; Steven Crossley, Bury; Kieran O' Brien; via email; Adam Martin, St Helens; Josh Wilkie, Paisley; Stephen Maclean, Stonehaven; James Baxter, Aberdeen; Jamie Mountain, Fareham; James Richards, Caldicot; Conrad

myself, who have limited time to spend on games each night need to get immediate satisfaction otherwise it's a waste.

I loved the Game Boy game and I rushed to get it after my exams in July. But about 11 days later (by which time I couldn't return it) I realised it would just go on with the daily routine of watering the farm and… yawn. I press the power button and leave unconvinced. I own seven of the games in your most recent **NGC** Essential list and I've become now sceptical over five of them. If that's the best Gamecube has, I can't hold much hope for the remaining games which have got a lower score.

Maybe I'll play these games again, but most likely I won't. What's the point in buying a game that won't last until the end of a single run through? And when I see *Harvest Moon* in the secondhand games section of my local shop, I sigh and think how many other gamers were lured into the same trap that I was. This is the end of the gaming industry if people repeatedly become doubtful or sceptical over the games, which have been called 'absolutely wonderful.'
Tom Kikuchi, London

***If you like quick gaming fixes, why did you spend your money on something we told you would take around 100 hours to finish? And it's a farming sim; you should expect to spend time watering things. Most people wouldn't rush out to see every movie that got a good review, and with games being so much more expensive it's prudent to consider whether a high-scoring title suits your personal taste before buying it.* Ed**

'Sweet'

I found this in a local sweet shop and thought you guys might enjoy it. It's sweet (sickly) goodness!
Anna Glenfield, Abingdon

***How thoughtful! It looks like the postman has punched half his face off though.* Ed**

'Harold S. Bloxham'

Many moons ago, back when I owned a Mega Drive and SNES, I entered a competition in Mega magazine. Way back in 1993-ish. Anyway, in this competition we were challenged to get a letter published in a paper. This letter had to be a complaint about computer games under the guise of Harold S. Bloxham. I managed this feat of getting my letter published as Harold, and complained that Mario collecting coins and Sonic collecting gold rings were the reason kids turned to theft. Well you can imagine the responses in the paper. He he.

As part of the compo (which went on for a few months) I cut out the article and sent it in to Mega to claim my prize (which was getting bigger every month). Alas, I never won but I did get a mention in the mag, sort of. It mentioned my letter but the Ed said that one of the guys in the office (Neil, I think) lost it. So I never won a single game. Sob! Nobody won, in fact. Now I know this is a long shot… but can I claim my prize?
Rob Fice, Plymouth

***Mega who? Tell you what – if you (or anyone else) can repeat the feat using the name Reginald Fils-Aime, I'll send you a prize. Honest.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

Yes, it is a well proven fact that Trevelyan does in fact run slower than every other character in *GoldenEye*. It should be obvious considering that he is fat.
James Fellows, via email
***No, no, it's Robbie Coltrane (Zukovsky) who is fat.* Ed**

As I type this I have sore hands, my neck burns, my shoulders ache and my wrists are weak. This, my friends, is the magic of *Donkey Konga*.
Bradley Finney, via email
***Thank goodness you don't work for Nintendo's marketing dept.* Ed**

I have a friend who thinks that *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* is better than *The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*. This is complete rubbish talk.
Hector Stanley, Woking
***Opinions.* Ed**

At least I'm not an old crank like the bint I've just endured on television who was masquerading as a journalist.
Gemma Hall, Exeter
***You tell her.* Ed**

I may just be really gullible.
J Watkins, via email
***Possibly.* Ed**

You had finally done it with a stench of "style".
Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark
***We reek of style.* Ed**

The definition of a console is a dedicated games machine.
Johnny Total, via email
***According to our dictionary it's 'a housing for electronic equipment'.* Ed**



'Drew this'

I'm going to have to agree with the previous claims that not enough art is being sent in. So just for you I went and drew this. Dressing up my all time favourite game character as Pikachu was surprisingly fun… Feel free to question my sanity. Enjoy!
Monica Ion, London

***That's brilliant. Want a job?* Ed**

'More of the same'

While pondering through **NGC**/100 I came across John Mulvey's letter about the ubiquitous 'companies are relying on rehashes' topic. I can't help but disagree slightly.

I know companies have tendencies these days to release sequels, and EA's yearly updates are unbelievably tiresome, but come on. If you play an absolute classic, a sequel is exactly what the doctor ordered. For example, I loved *Prince of Persia* and couldn't believe my luck when a sequel was announced. Surely if you love a game that much then more of same is perfect. Also, unlike movie sequels, game sequels are almost always improved with new features bolted on and the legacy behind true classics remains for a lifetime.

My second gripe was that John describes the bare bones of Mario games to be, 'collecting coins and saving princesses.' Now this may be true but there is so much more to Mario games. The FLUDD, the gameplay and the level design are almost completely changed from the '80s so this statement is just too vague.

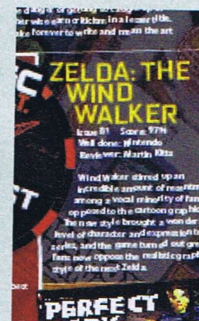
Even if Nintendo continue to release the same franchises over and over, they pack them with innovation and keep their games feeling fresh every time.
Alasdair Henry, Morpeth

***As long as it's a proper sequel and not just the exact same thing as before but with better graphics and some stackable crates.* Ed**

'How stupid'

I was confused when I heard EA did not release *Burnout 3* because they felt the game lost too much without its online capabilities. True, online gaming is becoming more popular, but take this into account: what do you reckon the ratio of the number of people who play the game with friends in the same room is in comparison to the number of people who play the game online? I mean come on, EA, how stupid can you be? Are

CORRECTION CORNER



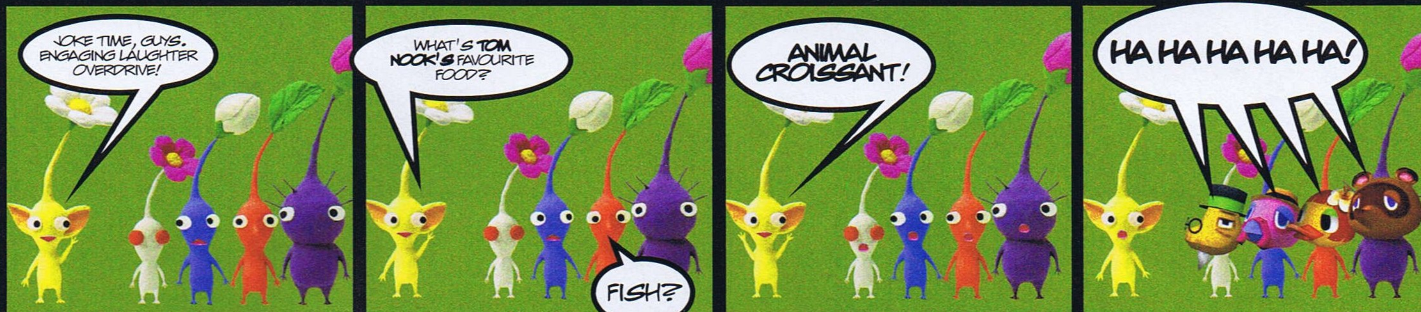
I was flicking through the pages of the 100th issue when I saw quite a huge mistake. On page 82's Hall Of Fame there was a title called *Zelda: The Wind Walker*. But the actual game is called *Zelda: The Wind Waker*. Unless you did this as a joke that is a BIG mistake.
Paul Roberts, Walsall

***That's the last time I trust an art monkey to type the headlines. Bah.* Ed**

Stroebel, Netherlands; Tim Lennox, Glasgow; David Barber, Sunderland; James Rowntree, Addlestone; Edmund King, Wadhurst; James Bowden, via email; Gareth Whitlock, via email; Samantha Lawrence, Buxton; Mike Blogg, Witney; Liam McCaffrey, Sheffield; James Wright, Thornton Heath; Michael Fenton, Livingston; Stephen Ashby, Dorset; Sam Rose, Bingham; Eoin Connolly, Ireland; Bjoern Dvergastein, via email; Tom Board, via email; Edward Hebbourn, via email; Darren Revell, Plymouth; Graeme Meredith, Peterborough; Jon Zalot, Anglesey; Peter Hume, Belfast; Andrew Wynne, Banbury; Mark Chapman, Cardiff; Lee Horscraft, Newhaven; Marcus Canning-Evans, Bath; Joshua Daly, Birmingham; Thanks, everyone.

GriNteNdo!

SEND US YOUR NINTENDO JOKES! MAKE THEM GOOD AND YOU WIN A GAME. BUT IF MR WHITE FAILS TO SEE THE FUNNY SIDE, THE YELLOW PIKMIN DIES. HORRIBLY.
THIS MONTH: JOKE INFLICTED BY AMY OLIVER'S MUM



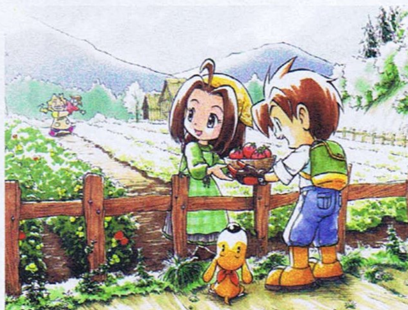
WRITE TO... GRINTENDO, MAILBOX, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW **OR EMAIL** NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

you trying to confine us to our houses and play against people we have never met? I think most people would rather play games with friends than somebody on the other side of the Atlantic.
Adam Meredith, Stafford

You're right. I couldn't care less about the online mode (not that there's any reason it couldn't be done on Gamecube). Ed

'Pneumatic'

I was playing *Harvest Moon* when a thought occurred – it was a sexist game. Why should the farmer be a man? Why should he require a son to inherit the farm? Girls' hands are better for sticking up sheep's backsides (they're smaller). So I sat down to write you a letter about the lack of 'real' female characters in games and the lameness of games aimed at girls. I intended to cite such examples as 'Mary-Kate and Ashley have a really fun time' (Hey Mary-Kate, let's apply our make-up with spatulas so the boys will like us), *WWE Day of Reckoning* with its 'Bra and Panties' mode, and Taki's disturbingly pneumatic breasts in *Soul Calibur 2*. Then I had a look at my



△ Fed up of being treated like a shy girlie, Celia tarmacs over the farm and leaves for the city.

own games collection and realised games have the same representations of women as any other form of modern media.

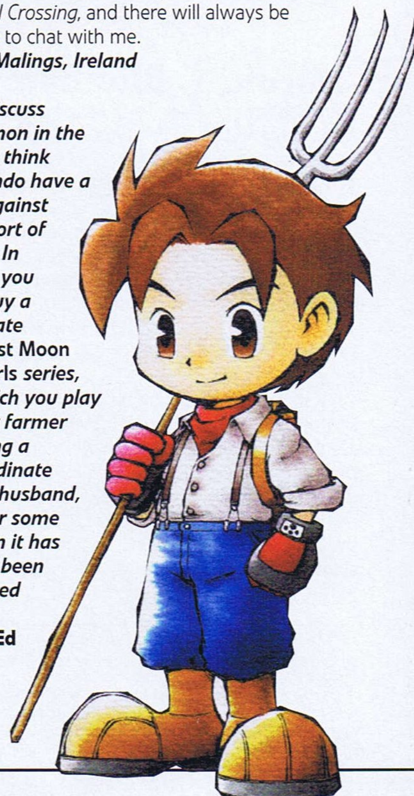
Beyond Good & Evil, *Resident Evil* and *Metroid Prime* are just three examples of games featuring female protagonists in a positive way. Okay, their clothing may be a little close-cut for the jobs in hand but it isn't a big deal that they are women. I'm a little young to remember the original *Metroid* so I don't really know about any fuss caused by the revelation of Samus as a chick, but right now I can't think of any fuss regarding female computer game characters.

I first became hooked on videogames with the arcade version of *Street Fighter 2* and I've been playing on consoles for the last 15 years, always Nintendo, and when I look at what other consoles have to offer me, as a girl gamer, it reaffirms that I have made the right choice in sticking by good old Ninty all these years.

The pick of Xbox and PS2 titles seem to consist largely of sports sims, racing games, war games and first-person shooters with more games in these genres flooding the market every week. I have little or no interest in these kinds of games unless they can offer me something different, like *Metroid's* explore, scan and – gaahhhhh, that big monster wasn't there earlier – aspects.

The Nintendo difference is that they provide me with games that I want to play; intelligent games that aren't just about large quantities of blood and violence or beating up prostitutes; games which appeal to people young and old, male and female. I'm never going to sit in a pub talking about what great games *GTA* or *Burnout 3* are, but I will be chatting about *Pokémon* or *Animal Crossing*, and there will always be people to chat with me.
Theo Malings, Ireland

You discuss Pokémon in the pub? I think Nintendo have a law against that sort of thing. In Japan you can buy a separate Harvest Moon For Girls series, in which you play a lady farmer seeking a subordinate househusband, but for some reason it has never been released over here. Ed



SO TELL ME THIS...

The NGC Think-O-Tron knows all...

1. If Mario 64 is coming out on DS does this mean that Ocarina of Time and Majora's Mask could be coming out?
2. Why does DS only have four buttons when it has the capabilities of an N64?
Jonathan Challinor, via email

1. It seems pretty likely.
2. Maybe it's to prevent the fascia looking cluttered. Or because you're supposed to use the little stylus to play most games.

1. What happened to the Memory Card 1019 and when is it released?
2. Can you customise your armour in Metroid Prime 2's multiplayer?
3. I've seen a Legend of Zelda style GBA SP, should I get that instead of a NES classic one?
4. Will there be a Pikmin DS game?
Rob Thompson, Solihull

1. Nintendo's gigantic, EA-friendly memory card is available on Japanese and US import, but not in Europe. We haven't heard anything about a potential release date in this country but we'll let you know as soon as we do. If you buy an imported memory card, it will work fine on a UK machine.
2. No.
3. It's all a matter of personal taste. The NES version has a thick plastic sticker on the front, whereas the Zelda one is printed directly on the case. We're quite keen on the Zelda one in the office.
4. I doubt the DS has the power to run Pikmin, but maybe there will be a slightly different type of game set in the Pikmin universe.

I'm getting a DS from Japan/I have a US edition of DS. How can I charge it up in this country? What kind of adaptor do I need? Where can I buy a step-down transformer?
Lots and lots of people

DS uses exactly the same battery as GBA SP, and consequently the same charger can be used to power it. If you already own a European SP, use the charger that came with it. If you don't want to buy an SP, you can buy third-party chargers that plug into the USB ports on a computer or the power socket in a car, or you could order a 'replacement' official one from the Nintendo Service Centre. Finally, if you really want to use the charger that came with your imported DS, most specialist electronics stores and import games shops will be able to sell you a 240v-110v step-down transformer to stop the UK power supply frying your machine.

Up the Revolution!

2005

New games! New hardware! We show you everything you'll want to play over the next year (and give you early warning of the things you won't). Get the *real* picture with **NGC**...

THE FUTURE OF...

POKÉMON



Find out where the series *should* be heading next if it wants to stay on top...



MARIO PARTY 6

Roar power or careless whisper? Get our verdict on voice-controlled Mazza.

BONUS!

- Another stunning free gift!
- More Metroid Prime 2 pro tips!
- We reveal the best opening levels on Gamecube!
- Plus! The best handheld section in the world!

Magazine contents subject to change – but only for the better!

Don't settle for second best. Get NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
On sale: Thurs 20th January

PROPHESYING THE NEWS OF TOMORROW WITH REAL-LIFE FUTUROLOGY

MADAME GREENER *Predicts...*



Looking into the future through crossed eyes...

THIS MONTH: EA'S 2005

See EA? They're the ones towering over the videogaming world like a giant robot made of games and money. Having practically turned the 2004 charts into a weekly advert for its own stuff, in what ways will EA be spending 2005 (whispers) *challenging everything?* Madame Greener asks an egg.

HOW IT WORKS

Yes, an egg. You crack it open, then separate the yolk and white. Pour the white into a bowl of hot water – we've used a clear Pyrex lasagne dish for that touch of real class – and that's Ovomancy. The resultant shapes are The Future. That's hen-credible (incredible)!

1 A complete ball or wheel translates as "good fortune". Or, if you like, it's a sun: "power and success". And just look at the size of it. Basically, 2005 will be so good for EA that we have images of employees drowning in a tsunami of cash after one of the fat money-pipes delivering banknotes straight to the offices of executives bursts through sheer pressure of moolah.

2 There's a three-dimensional triangle of stringy hen-juice up top – this means "something unexpected", and is joined by an eggy little snake over on the left. Racking our minds frantically for a meaning, we reckon this means a 2005 EA game featuring a surprise cameo from a rival company's character. Seeing as guest appearances are usually what fighting games 'do', it could be a new *Def Jam Vendetta* with, let's say, Sonic the Hedgehog in.

3 A bow, right? That refers to a scandal of some kind, while the rocky arch up above signifies that the furore is related to a journey abroad or, er, a wedding. Could be a controvers-o-treaty formed with a foreign developer, but the 'scandal' aspect – and that brain-shaped blob down south – makes us think more of a foreign somebody accusing EA of nicking their game ideas. Juicy! Like an egg.

4 The woman with the long hair and pointy hat leaped out at us immediately. Not literally (or we'd really have egg on our face, haha) but it does mean we're pretty confident that "a visitor" (the woman) will make EA "effective in a new job" (the hat). Sounds like the EA JCB will be scooping up a big-name developer bod in '05.

5 Little did you know that straight lines of egg mean "progress", while wavy lines mean uncertainty. Unsurprisingly, it's a carnival of protein-based straightness for EA. Nothing can stop them. *Not even egg white.*

6 That fuzzy lion in the corner means "influential friends" – and, tellingly, bobbing happily above it is the stringy island of Japan (albeit drawn very badly, mirrored, and rotated through 90-or-so degrees). The tidings are egg-citing (you knew it was coming): EA is to form a bond with a big-name Japanese developer. And that seahorse floating nearby means "good fortune". What, *again*?

AND THE PREDICTIONS...

- Company announces record profits in 2005: mathematicians announce new number, 'an EAillion'.
- EA to join forces with a big-name Japanese developer to create something very, very profitable.
- Influential independent developer – a woman? – to nestle under EA's big wing.
- New *Def Jam Vendetta* or other EA beat-'em-up to feature surprise cameo from rival company's character.
- EA dragged into the courts by some bloke claiming they stole his ideas about getting rich.

Madame Greener's egg-fuelled brain-spurts will be scrutinised in a future issue.

PREDICTION RESULTS

In **NGC**/98, a circular graph that men call 'a horoscope' gave La Greener a glimpse into Shigeru Miyamoto's October. Results:



1. Shigsy to leave Nintendo.
Was always going to be as likely as Reggie adopting a stray kitten. 0



2. New GBA *Wario Ware* to sell poorly in Japan.
Way off. In at number one, over 100,000 copies sold. 0



3. Miyamoto-developed puzzle game announced.
'Intuitive Stroke' on DS, and the Madame's puzzle obsession pays off. 1



4. Last-minute nightmares for Nintendo DS.
A little stage-managing of shortages, otherwise nowt. 0



5. News of a Shigsy-based court case to 'break'.
The only laws Miyamoto's broken are those of fashion. 0

TOTAL SCORE 1/5

Predicting the future via planets associated with your birthdate is *almost completely inaccurate*? Well, we'll be blowed.

TOP 10: NINTENDO NAMES

...and what they actually mean.



1 YOSHI

The Japanese word for 'goodness' – fine – but it also means 'respectful', which is a mite surprising for a character who'd happily tongue-grab your dinner and then squeeze it straight back out through his dirty dino-hole.



2 LUIGI

The Italian version of the not-so-trendy German name 'Hludwig', which means literally that Mario's brethren is 'famous in battle'. Right – famous for not being there.



3 DAISY

Simply refers to the name of the flower. Nice and suitable for the – let's face it – less masculine of Nintendo's two princesses, but it does have us wondering why you don't get people called 'Sunflower' or 'Rhododendron'. Or 'Old Man's Beard'.



4 KIRBY

So you thought Kirby was named after the vacuum cleaner? In fact, his moniker originally stems from the name of a church town in Old Norse. Or maybe he's just named after the hoover.



5 MARIO

Our extensive five-minute research sees Mario's name being linked to everything from 'bitterness' and 'rebelliousness' to 'virility' and 'a sailor'. He truly is the man for all people. Especially sailors.



6 ZELDA

Name your dog Lucky, and it's certain to fall out of a building or eat a lightbulb. Name your royal daughter after the Yiddish word for 'luck', and you're asking to wake up in the morning with Ganon's footprints all over the carpet and a distinct lack of princess.



7 REGGIE

Shortened form of Reginald, itself shortened from Reginaldus, in turn a Latinized form of Reynold, altered version of German name Reginold, which means 'to rule and advise'. Now turn that into 'to kick ass and take names' in fewer than five steps.



8 JOE

Mr Viewtiful's given name comes from a Hebrew title – Yoseph – which means, confusingly, 'God will add'. Add what? Maybe that co-operative two-player mode that Capcom took out of *Viewtiful Joe 2*. We'd like God then.



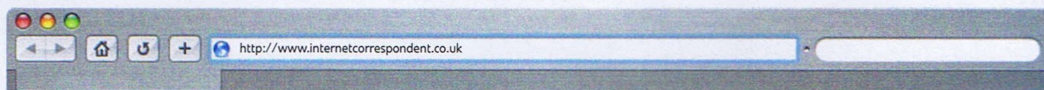
9 LEON

Resi 4's hero is named after the Greek for 'lion' – presumably why he sports hair that would see a lion pride instantly accepting him as one of their own. Also suggests 'braveness', but, really, you should see the way he screams when there's a chainsaw slicing into his neck.



10 ASH

Short for Ashley. Which, it helpfully says here, means 'Ash'. Which is short for… Oh, that's enough of that.



YOUR INTERNET CORRESPONDENT

The best of the 'net several weeks after it happens.

• Super Mario… on ice! Witness the truly laughable ice rink theatre from a very dusty corner of US TV history. Giant papier mache Goombas and Koopa Troopers skidding about on the skiddy surface are a cute thing - but then an old man wearing a Bowser costume starts singing, and there are suddenly children in sliding boxes everywhere. Best for shots of bemused, frightened audience members. And don't watch it before bedtime.
> www.freethemedia.com/files/video-marioice.mov
>

• "UGH! FINALLY!! My Mario quilt is complete," says internet resident 'Emily', having spent months stitching together 4cm squares of comfiness. The end result? A colourful, cosy bedcover featuring the 'tached one. Comments from impressed visitors include "You are my shero" and "Precision exemplified!" - and also "I love how it's pixellated, like in real life!" from someone who's presumably trapped in The Matrix.
> wwwcraftster.org/forum/index.php?topic=11325
>

• View homemade Lego loveliness at MOCpages, then search for 'Metroid Prime' and worship Mr Tommy Brooks, who has painstakingly Legoed up Samus's orange vessel only to be battered with thoughtless comments like: "It doesn't look like Samus's starship at all, and your Samus is not right." See also: Eternal Darkness weapons that are "not actually from the game Eternal Darkness." We despair. Look at the effort that's gone into it! Paul would try something similar, but he's still on Duplo…
> www.mocpages.com
>

• NGC reader Michael Manger emails us. "After making your extremely cool 'Paper Mario 2 3D battle scene' from NGC/98, I decided it would be cool (by cool, I mean really sad…) to make some Mario movies. However, due to lack of inspiration, they've turned out really short and a bit random." We think they're strangely, hypnotically, loveable. Maybe we're biassed, but we can't help watching the tumbling fella over and over. Take a look for yourself.
> maj.com/cgi-bin/gallery.cgi?f=2603
>

//got a link?//
Got a Nintendo-related link for us? What are you waiting for?! Email it to ngcyic@hotmail.com



NGC TOP 100

THE BEST GAMECUBE GAMES YOUR MONEY CAN BUY…

WHY YOU NEED IT!



Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles.

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide – it's got:

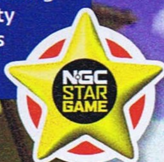
- **The 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **We tell you which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you?..**
- **A brief description of the game, so if you don't have that issue you can find out the most important points about it.**
- **Highlighted games, with a little more detail. As games join the list, the highlights will change!**



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close to 'art' as 'games' have been yet.













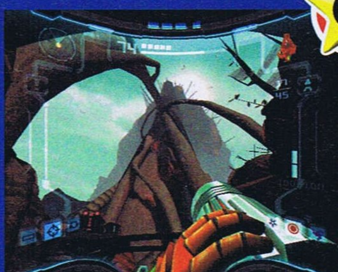


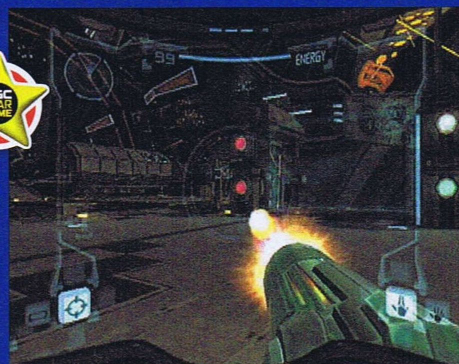
2 METROID PRIME 97



NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible, and there's no slow down at all, despite the fact that the environments are huge and detailed. The action's varied, with a broad range of bosses, and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play – on any system.







3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story. Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. You need one of those…





4 METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

94

NINTENDO ■ NGC/101

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our one complaint.







5 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

93

NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pickup boxes, weapons from slippy bananas to green shells and giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lotta fun.



6 F-ZERO GX

92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

Blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep the pace up without getting the frame rate jitters. You will never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would've been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?







7 PIKMIN 2

92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has proved less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to earth for a longer session of collecting 'treasure'. They've got two new types of Pikmin to help them out, too. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original.



8 SOUL CALIBUR 2

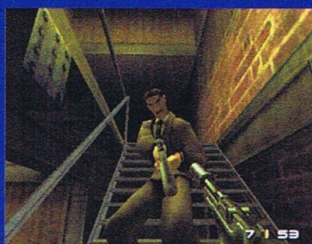
91

NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent fast-paced fighting. Weapon Master mode is your key to unlocking the three hidden characters – but the real star of the show's not hidden! For the Gamecube version, Namco have dropped in Link, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.







9 TIMESPLITTERS 2

91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate and you'll wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. And you *will* love every minute. The multiplayer's the icing on the cake.



10 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

All your Nintendo favourites (and a few Nin-non-entities) get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have massive amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.





TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2

Cute-looking turn-based strategy, with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE

Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep returning to.

3 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA

An RPG with puzzle and platform elements starring our two top plumbers.

4 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

One of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

5 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2

This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever.

6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE

The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em into battle – but still the most entertaining RPG out there…

7 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT

Nicks the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.

8 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION

Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games. A sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing difficulty level.

9 HARVEST MOON

A slow burner, *HM: Friends of Mineral Town* is a farming/charming sim to die for. It'll last you months.

10 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player.



TOP 100

The best Gamecube games around

11 HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/91

Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change… Despite a new 'chapter' structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals apart from hybridising crops, but you'll keep returning to do a bit of milking…



12 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN 91

EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Bald barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly – but how else you go about it is up to you, because this is freeform gaming at its finest.



13 PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME 91

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/90

Ubi Soft show other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey… but really, it all reeks of quality. Superb.



14 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR 91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

With Mario's papery ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only they can make.



15 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

A few tiny frame rate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy, and it looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is absolute magic.



16 VIEWTIFUL JOE 90

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

Some people love the unusual looks, some people hate them. Either way, get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only adds to the cinematic feel. It can be frustrating, but you'll love it anyway.



17 SECOND SIGHT 90

CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97

Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. The levels are tightly designed, offering scope for replay, while its distinctive style and original touches make it one of the most memorable games we've played in years.





18 METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES 90

KONAMI ■ NGC/91

Superb stealth action and a great story combine with revamped graphics to make this old PlayStation title blossom on Gamecube. The voice acting and music are superb. The only problems are the long, unskippable cut-scenes, the short length and possibly too many bosses. We're just picky…



19 BURNOUT 2 90

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great, it's wonderfully fast, and then there are the crashes… When you've had fun roaring round the streets, Crash mode gives you the opportunity to beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.



20 WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAME$ 90



NINTENDO ■ NGC/97

A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's wholeheartedly original, outlandishly quirky and good fun. What's more, because you can put in your own name and store your records, it handicaps experienced players so less able ones can play on an equal footing.



21 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 1 & 2 90

ATARI ■ NGC/78

This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one of *those*. 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this. Don't risk 'em.



22 1080° AVALANCHE 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trialling modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off your time for months.



23 ANIMAL CROSSING 90

NINTENDO ■ NGC/98

Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full 'teenaged Dr Moreau' experience can be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow it's horribly addictive, as you improve your house, fill the museum and get a life.



24 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90

ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll devour vast chunks of your life," our RPG fanatic assures us. The spaces in between the meat of your quest (for some missing moonstones) are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping. Looks dated now.



TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Yes. it's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC
Can't touch *Sunshine*, but it's entertaining and looks 'the bomb'.

WARIO WORLD
Not that tough to beat, admittedly, but still bags of fun.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching crashes.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 90

SCI ■ NGC/86

Even better than the last *CDS*, but again very brown and set during the first Gulf war. There's a new aspect to this one: you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroics and more opportunity for you to 'get to know' your squad members.



26 WORMS 3D 90

SEGA ■ NGC/87

You know the score. You have four worms. Your worms must kill other worms. The special weapons are as crazy as ever (Sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade). The only real difference is, it's now in 3D, which will affect your strategies. For the better. A multiplayer blast.



27 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89

NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

Lovecraftian horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls, and when that drops to the bottom… Let's just say you'll be glad your mind has gone. There are a few weaknesses in the combat, but it's nearly perfect otherwise.

28 RESIDENT EVIL 89

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore. Then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

29 SPLINTER CELL 89

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Ageing special agent Sam Fisher's first outing. Sam stealths his way round the realistically gritty Clanciverse with various high-tech, high-improbability gadgets like sticky bombs and camera disruptors at his disposal. It's your usual silent-man-takes-on-terrorists fare, but done with flair.

30 SSX3 89



EA ■ NGC/87

Snowboard your way around one gigantic mountain, entering races or competing to show off your tricks. Complete all three peaks on the mountain and you'll get the opportunity to spend 15-30 minutes sliding and tricking your way down the whole thing. The frame rate can be glitchy, and it's not *quite* as free roaming as it seems at first glance, but it's ultimately a superb, stunty, downhill racer.

31 DONKEY KONGA 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer's worth the expense.

32 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 88
EA ■ NGC/98
This is a big game. There are probably lost tribes in there if you play for long enough – but you won't see them if you have other interests, like a job or social life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

33 LUIGI'S MANSION 88
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67
The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's TOO SHORT. That apart, his escapades in his newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. The man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

34 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88
ATARI ■ NGC/67
The first ingenious update of old classic *Marble Madness*, with encapsulated monkeys rolling around bizarre landscapes collecting bananas. Minigames include obvious ballgames like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

35 NBA STREET V2 88
EA ■ NGC/84
You don't need a serious basketball sim – this one is stacks of fun, and unless those real-life stats are really vital to your enjoyment of a game, *NBA Street's* got everything you need. Three-on-three action, stunt combos and special moves, all crammed into a fast-moving game.

36 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Without a doubt the best Star Wars game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note: the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

37 MADDEN NFL 2005 87
EA ■ NGC/99
The main change in this bitterly tough latest instalment in the franchise is Hit Stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that and a few tweaks to defensive plays and Franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual for Madden.

38 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87
MAJESCO ■ NGC/82
All your favourite rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Starting as a mere rookie, fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and play the part of your girlfriend as she catfights with other lissome lovelies. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

39 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67
Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it! – but is such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds and stunts, a range of locations… Come on, this is Tony Hawk. Before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

40 LOST KINGDOMS 2 87
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81
Lovely looking card-based RPG – not quite up to *Phantasy Star's* standards, but statophiles are going to love building their decks and crunching numbers. Essentially it's a string of bite-sized gaming morsels that you can chomp away at will, putting it down and returning to it later with ease.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from fight kings Namco.

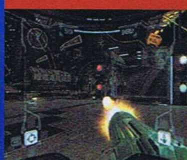
SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types pounding each other's faces in.

VIEWTIFUL JOE
The only one-player beat-'em-up in our top five. Stunning.

DEF JAM VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

MK DEADLY ALLIANCE
"Mind if I remove your spleen?" "Ooh, go on – finish me."

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

TIME-SPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks great and lacks the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel.

XIII
Euro-shooter with comic-book looks and very serious violence.

IKARUGA
A pure arcade shooter that's tougher than most.

41 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 86
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/90
Wonderful-looking action adventure with you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning, and the speech and effects make the grade too. Even the minigames are fun. The world is huge and detailed, but the slightly easy difficulty means it won't last as long as you'd like.

42

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/91
Multiplayer RPG for up to four players – but each one will need a GBA and link cable to connect to the Gamecube, making this stupidly expensive if you're to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared 'air bubble', designed to keep you all on the same screen, can be claustrophobic, but all in all this is good looking and ambitious. Not really *Final Fantasy*, though.

43 WARIO WORLD 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
Punching, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N)! The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game, and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

44 BURNOUT 86
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Absolutely killer racer in its day that was improved on massively by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth frame rate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2* because it's got all that and so much more. Not that you'd be unhappy with this, far from it!

45 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86
SEGA ■ NGC/87
Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese, platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

46 PIKMIN 86
NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Only Shigsy could've come up with a real-time-strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth was a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. And it looked as wonderful as it played. Just too short.

47 XIII 86
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/88
Unusual graphics – cel shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (sequences of images, guns that literally go 'bam') set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace as you set about solving the conspiracy and recovering your memory.

48 NFL 2K3 86
ATARI ■ NGC/79
Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing effectively together. However, the enormous Franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American Football, if a tad out-of-date.

49 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING 86
EA ■ NGC/87
Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (most notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom.

50 NBA LIVE 2004 86
EA ■ NGC/88
Under the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats and facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved, and you've more offensive options. It's soulless but slick.

51 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO 85
CAPCOM ■ NGC/78
Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Fab cut-scenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old Resi atmosphere. A coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere…

52 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR 85
NINTENDO ■ NGC/95
For a Mario game, there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses. It's just not as whacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

53 IKARUGA 85
ATARI ■ NGC/80
Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the Easy difficulty. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to shoot the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all.

54 FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 85
EA ■ NGC/87
The best footie sim on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players and licensed teams and stadia. The free kick system's been tweaked, and corner-taking's menu-driven. So, a single game or a whole career? It's all here.

55 EXTREME G3 85
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
An underrated gem, this. It's very fast, the tracks are huge, sprawling and well-designed, and you'll find some very cunning uses for the inventive weapons you acquire. The only down side is that it's a bit soulless. The multiplayer's also nowhere near as good as it could – or should – have been.

56 SPIDER-MAN 2 84
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96
How long have we been waiting for a game that actually makes us feel like a superhero? Well, it's here! Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll actually feel the joy of doing whatever a spider can. It's not detailed, and some of the quests and missions get samey, but still… that swinging!



DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

57 JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Mega City One comes to life. Sadly, it's not an especially *long* life, but while it lasts you get to play as ol' chinny himself, solving crimes, nailing perps and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot-on. Apart from the length, the fiddly controls are the other letdown.

58 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The Pokémon series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters! Aww. Really, though, it's an awful lot of fighting, and you'll need a GBA Pokémon title to get the most out of the Colosseum mode.

59 TALES OF SYMPHONIA 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

A 'traditional' RPG, and good looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the specific locations you enter throughout the adventure are stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will irritate, though.

60 RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC 84

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78

Rayman manages to create a fun platformer, despite his inability to add anything new to the genre. It's bright, it's solid, and it's got some enjoyable minigames. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right. When you've played all the Mario you can handle, give Ray a go.

61 ISS2 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

Once upon a time, this series was untouchable, but the FIFA games have ramped up their quality while the GC *ISS* seemed much slower than its predecessors and your players had huge turning circles. *ISS2* is a great game, but we expected so much more of it. However, it's MUCH better than *ISS3*.

62 ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE 83

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88

Star Wars is about screaming TIE fighters and taking on Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. So, whether you're playing Luke Skywalker's storyline or Wedge Antilles', the on-foot sections ruin the rest. Which is a shame, because it looks and sounds near-perfect, and the two-player *Rogue Leader* rules.

63 SERIOUS SAM NEXT ENCOUNTER 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

Don't be fooled by the name, this is very silly indeed. For a mere £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly-coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. Okay, the killing can get a bit relentless, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's the man. Never mind the depth, feel the speed!

64 FREEDOM FIGHTERS 83

IO ■ NGC/86

Less serious than the *Desert Storm* series, this squad-based third-person shooter is nonetheless hugely enjoyable and involves a decent degree of strategy. Forget rubbish like bullet trajectories and get your plumber and his team out on the streets of Noo Yoik to take on the invading Russians.

65 TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2 82

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100

Tony Hawk rumbles on. This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode features a lot of Bam Margera. Some bits don't belong in a skateboard game, like driving vehicles and walking. Those bits are rubbish. The rest is great, and includes chunks of the first three games – with timer!

66 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 82

ATARI ■ NGC/78

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys want you dead. And they probably carry guns. Inside balls (WHERE A MONKEY BELONGS!), the little creatures are a delight. *SMB2* offers you a wide array of minigames and over 100 levels to roll your imprisoned simian around.

67 METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM 82

VIVENDI ■ NGC/88

Hard – like Ray Winstone in a steel top hat. This robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the difficult training level. The enemies are extremely resilient and have superb AI, so you need to be accurate and quick. The camera can be awkward, and landscape hazards (eg water is instantly fatal) can be unfairly harsh.

68



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III 82

SEGA ■ NGC/94

A new style of gameplay for Phantasy Star – card-based battling. Set years after the events in *PSO 1&2*, you now have to choose a side (Arkz or Heroside) and do battle by rolling dice and selecting cards from a deck. It can be quite complex, and you really need to be familiar with the other Phantasy Star games to get the most out of it, so it's not for newbies. You'll also require one of those elusive broadband adaptors…

69 THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT 82

EA ■ NGC/89

Having spent their previous game imprisoned within the four walls of their home, this one sees your virtual people playthings freed from their luxury prison as you send them out to work. It's still rather ugly, and it doesn't sound too great, but it will last you a very long time.

70 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA OOT MASTER QUEST 81

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Free with *Wind Waker*! You may have played this beauty back in the days of the N64 version, and it still looks pretty much the same, although the Master Quest version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles. Forget the ropy graphics and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

71 AGGRESSIVE INLINE 81

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72

Top-class roller skating sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means you can pull off moves like swinging round lampposts. There's even a Career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is rubbish and the graphics are bland. Still, the frame rate is smooth.

72 THE SIMS 81

EA ■ NGC/79

Life, Jim, but not as we know it. Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would – leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. Like *Animal Crossing*, there's no point to it, but that's life for you: meaningless, but you want to keep doing it.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own Gamecube itself.

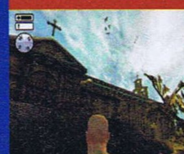
METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure. Again.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

LOST KINGDOMS II
Polished RPG with card collecting elements. Neat.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the *'Splitters 2* team.

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Another Nintendo exclusive that never fails to entertain.

SPLINTER CELL
Captivating stealth-laced adventure from the hand of Tom Clancy.

73 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81

EA ■ NGC/76

Four authentic race seasons in one tidy package! Makes a difference from that 'yearly update' malarkey, eh? What's more, the first year's is 1999, when Ferrari weren't guaranteed to win everything. It's a good, sensible, deep Formula 1 sim. The down side is, it's not exactly a barrel of laughs…

74 PAC-MAN VS 80

NAMCO ■ NGC/90

This tiny gem is free – but only when you buy another, inferior full-priced title (*R: Racing Evolution*). While *Pac-Man Vs* isn't a complex title, the four-player mechanic works well. Think of it as a trifle to have fun with between 'serious' gaming sessions. You'll need a Game Boy and link cable to play it properly.

75 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY 80

EA ■ NGC/99

More fighting style/ More stylin' fight/ If only they'd/ Got the frame rate right.
Yes, this is actually much better than *Def Jam Vendetta*, with a great fighting system and brilliant have-a-go crowds, but the jerkiness (graphical scratching..?) ruins it.

76 NHL 2005 80

EA ■ NGC/99

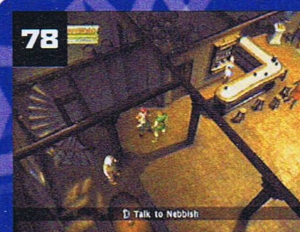
Plays a slick game of hockey that'll restore the faith of anyone who invested in last year's sluggish, jerky version. If you genuinely dislike the sport, you won't be convinced. But as a videogame, hockey works well enough to hurdle a few transatlantic sporting barriers – it's quick, easy to learn and high scoring.

77 MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier MKs , although it's far too easy to get an 'infinite' by button mashing. The lack of ring outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

78



BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81

A traditional sort of RPG (none of that card nonsense!) based on a long-established PC series. Endlessly battling kobolds, goblins and their monstrous ilk can grow tedious, but if you've ever played Dungeons & Dragons you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. Technically, however, *Baldur's Gate* is poor. It's a lazy port from PS2, with bad slowdown and a very jittery frame rate when the screen is full.

79 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/87

After a succession of stinkers, the Simpsons take a tip from GTA and set about stealing cars, taking on missions and even dishing out a bit of violence. There are even racing and item-locating side missions. Original it isn't. But funny it is! As long as you don't expect depth, you'll have fun with this.

80 MARIO PARTY 5 80

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

Ain't no party like a Mario Party. Except all the other parties in the series. This console-based boardgame is one of the best yet, but is still really only good as a multiplayer game. The boardgame bits are a little slow and dull, but the minigames – popping other players' inner tubes, mech fights – are hilarious.



81 DIE HARD VENDETTA 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/74

WARNING: Do not play this in earshot of old people or your mum. We're sure The Vest never swore quite like this. We've never encountered such a pottymouthed game on a Nintendo console. However, McLean did enjoy a fair bit of gunplay, excellent set-pieces and cheesy dialogue. This has plenty of all three, all hampered by cumbersome controls and frustrating sections. Yippee-kay-ay, melon farmer. As he doesn't say.

82 POOL PARADISE 80

IGNITION ■ NGC/92

Not just UK pool – poke your cue at eight-ball, nine-ball and stunt tables too, if that's what fills your triangle. Using the analogue stick to power your cue is a nice touch, and darts and *Dropzone* feature as minigames. Earth shattering? No. But it's all solid and playable, as you'd expect.

83 PUYO POP FEVER 80

SEGA ■ NGC/91

Puyo Pop: if you've never heard of it, you must have started gaming all of a week ago. It's quite simple: match coloured blobs that drop from the top of the screen and – hey presto! – they disappear. How radical is that? Two-player's a whole lot more fun than you'd think, too.

84 NFL STREET 79

EA ■ NGC/90

American Football isn't quite brought to the masses by *NFL Street*. Even though the strategy's dumbed down it's still very stoppy-starty and so can be slightly drawn-out. We'd also have liked a custom play editor or a whacky training mode to help players get to grips with the basic plays.

85 HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN 79

EA ■ NGC/95

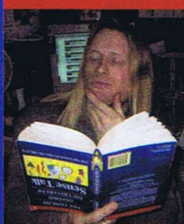
A Potter title that actually works pretty well as a game! Whatever next? The way you use the differing skills of Harry, Ron and Hermione to solve problems adds interest to a (we're being kind here) rather thin storyline. The controls are a bit iffy, but the atmosphere's spot-on. Not just for Potter fans.

86 BEACH SPIKERS 79

ATARI ■ NGC/72

Not to everyone's taste – although developers AM2 have at least abandoned the 'jigglies' and concentrated on making a proper sports sim. You'll need lightning-quick reactions and good team control to succeed. Its single-player appeal is limited, so you'll need to play with friends to get the most from it.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



8 BALL

Trust the Magic 8 Ball. I know it's just a bit of plastic filled with oil and stuff, but there's something in there that knows way more than you or me.

BUDGET CHIC

I made a great lava lamp last night. Well, it was more of a 'raisins in a glass of lemonade on a torch' lamp, but it still rocked all the same! And then you can drink it. Genius!

NHS 'ROCK' WARNING

Going to the barbers can seriously shorten your hair.

"I'M NOT A CARNIVAL!"

"…anyway, if people were supposed to be vegetarian, animals wouldn't be made of meat – or taste nice for that matter. I love animals…"

READER SENSE

If you were told to expect the unexpected you would not expect the expected, and the unexpected would become the expected and the expected would become the unexpected. So what would you expect?!

George Armstrong
Email

(You'd expect to dissappear up your own backside, I'd say – PE)

Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense-spewing Art monkey? More than likely! So go on, send 'em in. The best get printed, and if you're really lucky, he may send you a plum tomato, in an old sock.

Send them to him at **paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk** or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

87 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO 79

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Enormous depth and an avalanche of play modes give the game longevity – Versus mode will last you for ages – but it doesn't work well with the GC's joypad (specials on the C-stick? Cheapness abounds!) and so you'll really need to shell out for an arcade stick. It's pretty ugly too.

88 DAKAR 2 79

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

Two problems with this: it's basically one big time trial (and you can find a Time Trial mode in any racing game) and there aren't any real opponents. The handling of your vehicle and the varied courses between Paris and Dakar make up for it. A fun drive, just not a very competitive one.

89 NBA COURTSIDE 2002 79

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

There's a wealth of basketball games available for your Gamecube, and this is far from the worst, with all the passing, dunking and other ball-based moves you could ask for. However, it's not the best or most recent either. *NBA Street V2* or *NBA Live 2004* would be our preferred choices.

90 NHL HITZ 20-02 79

MIDWAY ■ NGC/67

Ice hockey's probably the most Brit-friendly of North American sports – no slowing down, fewer strange-seeming terms to get used to – and this is a fast, slick game. *NHL 2005* is more recent and slightly better, but if you can't get that, *NHL Hitz 20-02* is going to be your next best ice hockey option.

91 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 79

EA ■ NGC/75

Decent boxer. Slightly better than – and very different from – *Rocky*. The camera's really dynamic, and the control system can feel disorientating at first. There are plenty of modes, and you can build your own boxer to punch his way through Career mode. Looks rather nice, too.

92 SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 78

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/97

Sam Fisher returns for more spying, sniping and skulking around in the dark – but his first adventure was far superior. The quality of the conversion's not great and some serious gameplay flaws from the Xbox original haven't been addressed, but we kept coming back. Until the glitchy last level, anyway.

93 HARRY POTTER & THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS 78

EA ■ NGC/76

A competent and attractive adaptation of the second film, but not too challenging either. Experienced gamers will be flinging spells around and getting through it in no time, so Harry's basilisk-locating escapade is best left for Potter fans or the very young. Better than *Philosopher's Stone*, though…

94 ROCKY 78

RAGE ■ NGC/74

Five Rockies for the price of one as you fight your way through all the films, complete with all the great opponents. Are you ready to take on Mr T, fool? Then this solid fighter will let you do it. It's not exactly imaginative, but there's plenty to unlock and the two-player's good fun.

95 EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING 78

KONAMI ■ NGC/79

This snazzy-looking Tony Hawk's clone should keep you happy, but it's a bit like going to see an Elvis impersonator when the King's in town: while the real thing's available and is of a higher quality, that's what you're best off with. Happily, unlike Tone's later excursions, this features no walking or driving.

96 SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES 78

ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73

The landscapes are absolutely enormous, so you'll have great fun roaring around them in your buggy, avoiding the Law, who wants to put your illegal trading out of action. Unfortunately, the repetitive gameplay and awful music are more likely to teach you the error of your ways.

97 P.N.03 77

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84

A super-stylish shooter featuring a dancing heroine who pulls off all sorts of slick moves. Not being able to move and shoot at the same time proves awkward, and the repetitiveness and bleak design don't do the game any favours. It's for you if you *really* enjoy shooting robots.

98 ROBOTECH BATTLECRY 77

TDK ■ NGC/77

Games about stompy robots always let us down in some way. In this case, it's a little too repetitive and boils down to locating red dots on your radar and blasting at them. Nonetheless, it's true to the anime and the story scenes are terrific, despite the cringeworthy voice acting.

99 NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 77

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

The graphics really let this one down – it gets disturbingly jerky at points and at others it can be hard to see what's going on. It's a pity the lack of attention spoils it, because there are loads of races (111, in fact) and it's pleasingly fast with a decent number of cars. Better than *NFSU2*.

100 TRUE CRIME THE STREETS OF LA 75

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88

As the only free-roaming crime title on Gamecube, this doesn't have a lot of competition, but the fiddly gameplay and annoying Good Cop/ Bad Cop meter mean it'll often frustrate you. There's also rather too much loading going on between the too-short missions. But it's as close as you'll get to *GTA* on GC.




Now entering A:
Hawkins
Woof!
Shedwards
ha ha, very good sir
your mum
Hawkins
Bins
your mum
Shedwards
oh, you're good at this sir!
Hawkins
your mum eats from the trash
POWER
Shedwards
CAPS
SHIFT
SPACE
ENTER
SEND
SELECT
NINTENDO DS

The Legend of Zelda The Minish Cap

Live the adventure of being small.







Hyrule's biggest hero is now its smallest.
Link will have his work cut out for him as he fights evil in his own land then shrinks to help the Minish people, a miniature race in dire need of a hero. Embark on your quest with the fantastic Zelda Limited Edition Pack, featuring the game and a gold coloured Game Boy Advance SP.

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